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ALASKA AND THE KLONDIKE











Washing out Gold with the Rocker

ALASKA

AND THE KLONDIKE

BY

JOHN SCUDDER McLAIN



Illustrated from Photographs

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To

My First Assistant

My Wife



CONTENTS

I.	THE "INSIDE PASSAGE"	3
II.	SKAGWAY TO DAWSON	22
III.	A "CHEE-CHA-KO" IN THE KLONDIKE	41
IV.	CROSSING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE	68
V.	THROUGH THE HEART OF ALASKA	98
VI.	PHASES OF LIFE ON BERING SEA	126
VII.	NOME AND THE GOLD FIELDS OF THE SEWARD PENINSULA	150
VIII.	THE SEAL ISLANDS	175
IX.	THE ALASKAN FISHERIES	194
X.	TRANSPORTATION—THE KEY TO ALASKA'S LOCKED-UP WEALTH	213
XI.	POLITICAL CONDITIONS	237
XII.	AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES OF ALASKA	258
XIII.	INDIANS OF ALASKA	276
XIV.	THE FAIRBANKS DISTRICT	303
XV.	THE REINDEER INDUSTRY	315



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Sailing the " Inside Passage " to Skagway	7
Totem at Wrangell	15
Hydraulic Mining, Silver Bow Basin	17
Juneau in Winter	19
" Mushing " over White Pass in 1898	20
White Horse Rapids	25
Bishop Bompas	28
Typical Upper Yukon Craft in 1898	33
Travelling on the Yukon	35
" Wooding up " on the Yukon	37
Five Finger Rapids on the Upper Yukon	40
The Governor's Residence in Dawson	43
Looking Northwest down the Yukon	47
Northwest Mounted Police	52
Street Scene in Grand Forks	57
George A. Brackett Washing out a Pan	59
" Chee-cha-ko " Hill in the Klondike	63
" Skipper " Norwood	65
Washing out Gold with the Rocker	73
River Front at Eagle	75
The Senator from Minnesota Ready for the Trail at Eagle	77
A Dog Team in Alaska	79

Page

Officers Composing Overland Expedition—Captain Jarvis on the Right 83
Ben Downing 87
Miner and Dogs Rigged for Packing . . . 91
Old Hudson Bay Trading Post, Fort Yukon . . 95
Bargain Day at Rampart 101
Dog Power at Rampart 103
While Crossing the Arctic Circle 105
Drying Salmon on the Yukon 107
Indian " Cache " at Rampart 109
Horns of Primeval Ox 111
Lodge of Arctic Brotherhood, Rampart . . . 113
Indian Graves at Anvik 115
A " Prominent Citizen " of Anvik . . . 118
An Afternoon Tea at Anvik 121
Holy Cross Mission Chapel 123
Indian School at Holy Cross Mission . . . 125
Old Russian Blockhouse at St. Michael . . . 127
Belles of St. Michael 129
Interior of the Kazhim, St. Michael . . . 133
The McCulloch at Sea 135
Captain Coulson 137
A Section of Nome 141
A Bit of Nome Surf 143
Landing at Nome 145
Arriving at Nome a Little Early 147
The Senate " Goes in the Air " 148

Page

Main Street in Nome 151
Nome in 1899 153
The Senatorial Banquet at Nome 155
Jafet Linderberg and Party 161
A Clean-up on " No. 8 Above," on Anvil Creek . 163
Sluice Boxes on Anvil Creek 165
Washing out Gold with a " Long Tom " near Nome 167
Curio Peddlers at Nome 170
Killing Seal on St. Paul Island 181
Taking Seal Pelts on the Killing Grounds . . 183
A Section of a Seal Rookery on St. Paul Island . . 185
Unalaska 195
Pacific Squadron in Dutch Harbour . . . 197
Kodiak, or St. Paul, on Kadiak Island . . . 201
Drawing in the Net at Karluk 205
South Alaska Indian in Kiak 209
Columbia Glacier, Prince William Sound . . 215
Valdez 219
It Snows in Valdez 223
Solomon Rapids, near Valdez 227
Islands in Sitka Harbour 239
Sitka Totems 241
Sitka in Winter 243
The Shore Walk Leading to Indian River Park . 247
The Greek Church at Sitka 249
Madonna in Greek Church, Sitka 251
Interior of Greek Church, Sitka 253

Page
Grown in Alaska 263
Potatoes from Kadiak 266
Varieties of Oats Grown at Sitka 268
Eskimo Woman Cooking Her Supper on the Sandspit at Nome 277
Fourth of July at Metlakahtla 281
Berry Pickers 283
Eskimo Woman and Child 287
Metlakahtla 289
Father Duncan 291
Residence and Totem of Chief Tlah-Go-Glass . . 293
Eskimo Boy and Young Malamute . . . 297
Getting Busy in Fairbanks 305
Fresh Arrivals at Fairbanks 309
Midday Rest of Reindeer Herd 317
Laps and Reindeer 319
Group of Laplanders in Alaska 321
Mary Andrewuk, Reindeer Rancher and Richest Native Woman in Alaska 323

A FOREWORD

When the special subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Territories visited Alaska in the summer of 1903 for the purpose of gathering information which would enable them to legislate wisely and helpfully with regard to that great district, I was fortunate enough to obtain permission to accompany the senatorial party in an unofficial capacity. The trip occupied, approximately, ten weeks, and carried us not only through the interior, along the whole course of the Yukon River, but to many places on the coast and among the islands not readily accessible by the regular means of travel. As will be readily understood, I enjoyed peculiarly favourable opportunities to study the resources and the possibilities of the country, and the following pages on Alaska, in their original form, were written for my paper after my return home, and published in it exclusively. There appears to be a demand for reliable and up-to-date information about that country—that, and the urgent request of men who have read what I have written, and who know Alaska, that it be given permanent and convenient form, are the excuses for this volume.

For this purpose the original story of Alaska has been carefully revised and the statistical information brought down to include the commercial and industrial operations of the year 1904.

J. S. M.

MINNEAPOLIS, 1904.





ALASKA AND THE KLONDIKE



I

THE "INSIDE PASSAGE"

"WELL, what do you think about it, anyway? Is Alaska any good?"

I have met that question in substantially that form a great many times since I returned from a somewhat extended journey through Alaska. Perhaps I cannot add much that is new to the romance of that land of adventure, but I am ready to furnish an answer to the above question.

In a nutshell, then—and prefatory first to the story of my trip and then to some discussion of the various important interests and questions pertaining to Alaska—my observation and enquiry have fully persuaded me that Alaska is a wonderfully rich country.

Rich in minerals—

Rich in timber—

Rich in agricultural possibilities—

Rich in fisheries.

When Secretary Seward purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867 for $7,200,000 the anti-expansionists of that period ridiculed the transaction as a piece of supreme folly and the public generally agreed that he had bought nothing in particular except a few fur seals and a vast expanse of icebergs and glaciers.

The commerce of Alaska for the year ending June 30,

1903, amounted to over $21,000,000, not including the gold output, which would add nearly $7,000,000 more. It is officially stated that since Alaska became American territory it has exported furs, fish and gold in about equal values to the amount of $150,000,000, while investments of American capital in Alaska have reached $25,000,000. To this should be added considerable sums employed in furnishing transportation to Alaska. The same official authority estimates the aggregate shipments of merchandise to Alaska from the United States during the same period at $100,000,000. It takes something more than a few seals and icebergs to develop a commerce of such dimensions. That this is only the small beginning of what is to follow in the not far distant future is my firm belief.

I hope I shall be correctly understood, for while I am much impressed with the great natural wealth of Alaska and the opportunities which it offers to men of courage and even moderate resources, it does not seem to me to offer at the present time to the man equipped with only a pair of strong hands the inducements which should attract him in large numbers. Labour is in moderate demand and comparatively well paid, but there are no "diggings" now like the beach sands at Nome, where at one time, with only a shovel and a pan, a man could wash out a moderate fortune in a few days. Such remarkably rich deposits of gold capable of being worked in the same inexpensive way may be found again, but there are no such attractive chances for the poor man in sight now.

During the winter of 1902 and 1903 when matters of

legislation affecting Alaska were under consideration by the Senate committee on territories the members of that committee felt considerably embarrassed by their lack of accurate and reliable information as to the real needs of that district. No member of the committee had ever seen Alaska. Advice was proffered on various subjects from various sources, not all of which, the committee felt, could be relied upon as valuable or disinterested. The conclusion could not be evaded that the proper thing for the committee to do was to send a delegation of its own members to Alaska during the summer vacation to study the district politically and commercially and from every other standpoint. Senator Beveridge, chairman of the committee, selected as such subcommittee Senator W. P. Dillingham, of Vermont, chairman of the subcommittee; Senator H. E. Burnham, of New Hampshire; Senator Knute Nelson, of Minnesota; and Senator Thomas M. Patterson, of Colorado. I was fortunate enough to secure, through the kindness of Senator Beveridge, permission to accompany this senatorial subcommittee on their tour of investigation. The party was in the charge of Colonel D. M. Ransdell, sergeant-at-arms of the United States Senate. Other members of the party were Secretaries A. C. Johnson, of Denver, and J. F. Hayes, of Indianapolis. I was extremely fortunate, too, in having for my travelling companion as far as Dawson, Mr. George A. Brackett, of Minneapolis, who was returning to look after important mining interests of his own in Atlin, on the Canadian side. His long and eventful life in the Northwest, his extensive acquaintance



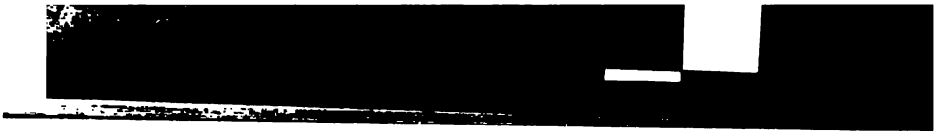
and his active and important participation in the constructive work between the Great Lakes and the Rocky Mountains in earlier days, and more recently in Alaska itself, made him an invaluable source of information and means of introduction.

The committee assembled at Seattle June 25, 1903. The business men of Seattle, whose prosperity has been built largely out of the Alaskan trade, were not slow to appreciate the importance of this official visit, and gladly availed themselves of an invitation to come before the committee and give information concerning Alaska and make suggestions as to what Congress could do to promote its welfare. Representatives of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce brought up for consideration at that meeting pretty nearly every question of importance that arose in the subsequent weeks of thorough enquiry—amendments to the mining laws and particularly the abolition of the power of attorney in locating mining claims; the question of a delegate in Congress and of a territorial form of government; the preservation of the fisheries; better mail facilities, and the great need of wagon roads—these and other matters affecting the development of the district were discussed by men compelled by their business connections and interests to be familiar with the situation in Alaska.

It was nearly 9 o'clock in the evening of June 28, when Captain Hunter gave the order to "cast loose" and the Dolphin drifted slowly out from the slip at Seattle and turned her prow toward Skagway. After the last "good-byes" had been shouted from ship to shore and from shore



Sailing the "Inside Passage" to Skagway



to ship and the handkerchiefs had ceased to wave farewell, my interest centred upon the ship's company. Night was falling and there was little opportunity then to see and enjoy further the scenic beauties of that great inland waterway, which is already beginning to attract the larger part of the commerce of our Pacific coast. The marvellous growth of the shipping with our own coast, with Alaska and with the Orient, which is centring in Puget Sound ports is an interesting theme of itself, but it is not a part of this story. We are bound for Alaska and find a shipload going the same way. It is an interesting company. The first question you will have to answer with respect to yourself when you start to Alaska, is whether you have ever been "inside." You will presently discover that "inside" and "outside" are the common designations of one's movements to or from Alaska. Those who are going to the interior of Alaska are "going inside" and those who leave the country are going "outside." And the term is not inapt. Here in the States we think of Alaska as a long way off, and the use of the words "inside" and "outside" with respect to it is unconscious testimony on the part of the residents of Alaska to the remoteness and present difficulties of access to the greater part of that country.

A turn on deck and through the cabin of this speedy and comfortable boat suggests the title of one of Mr. Besant's books—there are "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" there—and women, too. Indeed, women seem to predominate and an explanation is found in the fact that it

is a custom for men in Alaska and the Klondike whose business requires that they stay "inside" in winter to send their wives "outside" during that season. The women are now returning to their husbands. The rush had already gone in, on the earlier boats, but there are among the company some who have "struck it rich," and, mining being largely at a standstill in Alaska in winter, they choose to spend their winters in southern California or New York where there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the thousands which their sluice boxes yield in summer. There are some engaged in legitimate branches of business in Alaska and some not so engaged. We are many miles from Alaska's most southerly cape, but it is not too soon to scent the Alaskan atmosphere, and the opportunities afforded on board an Alaska-bound steamer to get in on the ground floor of a mining deal are not to be despised on account of their infrequency or for lack of the brilliant prospects that are offered.

Of course we take the inside passage, and the next morning finds us in British waters between the mainland and Vancouver Island, a piece of land about one-third as big as England herself, broken off the west coast of British America and rich in timber, minerals and fruitful valleys, with a climate not unlike that of the mother country, which held on to this island as well as the adjacent mainland as a crown colony long after the organisation of the Dominion of Canada.

It is just about an even thousand miles from Seattle to Skagway, and all the way practically the route lies among



the islands which guard the western coast like pickets of the line, their lofty mountain peaks often obscured by the clouds or glistening white as the sunlight falls upon their snowy summits. The channels are deep, the waters green and dark and wonderfully phosphorescent at night, but quiet as an inland lake; and one may give himself over to full enjoyment of the ever-changing and ever-charming panorama of sea and mountain, of crags and peaks and softly wooded slopes, of vegetation at the water's edge, dense and tropical in its luxuriance, suddenly cut off for a space where a rigid stream of ice and snow, heading up among the mountain tops, fills the passes between and comes down almost to the water's edge—such contrasts does Nature delight in that she plants her fairest flowers at the feet of her dead glaciers. Sometimes the water passes widen to several miles, and again they contract to a few hundred feet of narrow gorge where the deep green waters of the sea boil and foam and dash along the nearby rocky shores as the tide rushes in or out.

At such times the skill of the navigator is put to the test, especially under the hitherto deplorable and almost criminal neglect of this coast by the lighthouse service of both the United States and the Dominion Governments; for, while the Dominion Government has certainly acted more liberally, as well as more wisely, than our own Government in this respect, there is a pressing need of great improvement all along these now much-travelled waterways.

The inside passage is said to resemble very much the

waters along the west coast of Norway, whose fjords have begun to attract tourists from our own country by their wild and rugged grandeur, and it seems to me that when their attractions become known for what they are the ocean stretches of the archipelago between Puget Sound and the Lynn Canal are destined to constitute one of the most frequented summer playgrounds of the world, as they certainly are one of the most charming. What a delightful place for a holiday cruise in yacht or launch, where quiet coves or landlocked harbours may be found for every night's anchorage; where game abounds on the islands and the waters teem with life of every kind, from the trout of the mountain streams to the sociable porpoise and the spouting whale. And not only is there the charm of scenery, such as our continent nowhere else affords, and the opportunity for rare sport with rod and gun, but the hospitable and friendly native Indians, in their picturesque villages, are a source of unfailing interest. This archipelago is the land of the totem pole, whose grotesque and often hideous carvings argue strongly for the Asiatic origin of a people who are rapidly disappearing before the march of western civilisation. If their Asiatic origin may not be safely asserted, it must at least be conceded that in their handicrafts of weaving and carving their arts appear to have been much influenced by contact with the Japanese somewhere and at some time.

Captain C. E. Peabody, president of the Alaska Steamship Company, fully appreciating the importance to Alaska of affording the senatorial committee every facility for



prosecuting their work, gave instructions that the Dolphin should run on this trip to suit the convenience of the senators. This made it possible for us, after touching in the night at Ketchikan, the first port of entry in Alaska, to return—somewhat out of our course—early on the morning of the third day out, to Metlakahtla, the most remarkable and interesting Indian community in America. The story of this community has been told in part in newspapers and magazines, and naturally our interest was lively as we came in sight of its imposing church towers, its extensive fish cannery, its sawmills, its school and hospital buildings, its stores and comfortable-looking dwellings, and recalled the fact that this was the work of one man working alone, and beginning with a tribe of Indians who were once so low in the human scale that they have been accused of cannibalism when in their savage state. Father Duncan, as he is called, can hardly be spoken of as a type—there are no others like him.

As the ship touched the dock in the early morning, a few native men, who had been attracted by the boat's whistle, came forward bowing, and trying to make themselves understood in broken English—and when an Alaska Indian breaks up the English language his habit of gutturals and aspirates knocks it into little bits. One of them was sent forward to notify Father Duncan of our arrival, while we followed after, and met this remarkable little man as he came bustling out of his house, apologising for the apparently inhospitable reception, on the score of no anticipation of a senatorial visit. A short, stocky man,

round-faced and ruddy; merry-eyed and having under his round, black hat a fringe of thin, white hair; beard full and snowy; nervous and quick in movement, modest in every reference to his work, but pleased to have others interest themselves in it—these are some of the recollections I have of William Duncan as he led us to the schoolhouse, to the church, to the girls' school, the hospital, the salmon cannery, the sawmill, and repeatedly assured us that the Indians had built it all. Metlakahtla is on Annette Island, at the lower end of the American part of the west-coast archipelago.

If this is Indian life in Alaska, surely, it was suggested, the natives have little to complain of. But a view of what has been accomplished at Metlakahtla served later to heighten the contrast between what our Government has done, or rather, has not done, for the natives of Alaska, and what it ought to have done and might have done profitably, viewing the matter purely from the commercial standpoint.

But Father Duncan and his Indians furnish the material for a good story by themselves, the telling of which must be left for another chapter—for we have only just entered Alaskan waters, and Skagway, our ship's destination, is 300 miles away. Practically two-thirds of this beautiful archipelago, it should be understood, belongs to Canada. If we had known in 1845 what we know now about its resources of minerals and timber alone, perhaps we would have stood by our bluff of "fifty-four, forty or fight," and the whole coast from Puget Sound to Portland Canal,

where the Russian boundary of Alaska had been fixed in 1824, would have been under the Stars and Stripes.

Leaving Metlakahtla after a two hours' visit, we returned to Ketchikan, the first white man's town reached in Alaskan territory. It is a new and thriving little city of 1,000 people incorporated and commencing to take on the airs of municipal life in the form of public water-works and a municipal electric-light plant. Built largely on piles along the water's edge it looks like a town on stilts, the buildings on the water front, and those further up the mountainside, having difficulty to find a level place big enough for the four corners of a small foundation and compelled, while resting one side on the ground, to support the other in air, perched above the steep decline on long, upright timbers. Ketchikan exists because of important mining operations and prospects in that region and because of salmon canneries in that vicinity. It boasts, also, a busy lumber mill, at whose back door stands an immense forest of spruce, cedar, fir and hemlock. It is on these islands of the "inside passage" that nature has stored the principal timber resources of Alaska. They are not in large demand now, but the time will come when their extent and quality will constitute one of Alaska's important assets. Ketchikan, like Atlantic City, has a board walk, but here it penetrates the forest along the banks of a rushing mountain stream, and leads to the falls which are to furnish light and power. It sticks in my recollection because it afforded the first opportunity to see what the forests of these islands are, back from the shore line,

how gigantic the timber and how dense the growth, while the undergrowth in its rank and tangled luxuriance suggests nothing so much as the semi-tropical jungle of the Florida swamps, and this on mountain slopes whose summits are capped with perpetual snow. But the climate is out of keeping with the latitude.



Totem at Wrangell

On the same meridian with Fort York, where the Nelson River flows into Hudson Bay, and with north central Labrador, the thermometer rarely reaches zero at Ketchikan and the mean temperature is about that of Washington, D. C. The Japan current, which sweeps along the south side of the Aleutian chain, the south shore of the mainland and impinges on this archipelago, keeps all the harbours on its course open in winter as well as in summer and produces in this part of Alaska a climate which led ex-Governor Swineford, who is a resi-



dent of Ketchikan, to say that if he were a resident of any state east of the mountains he would come here to spend his winters in preference to Florida.

The same evening, July 1, we touched at Wrangell, at the mouth of the Stikine River. Once a Russian post, then leased to Great Britain for the benefit of the Hudson Bay Company, which lease cut a figure in the Alaskan boundary arbitration; afterwards a lively camp when the Cassiar mines were discovered and active still later when efforts were made to reach the Klondike by the Stikine route, Wrangell occupies a picturesque location, and tourists will always remember it for its curious totem poles. Here was established the first military post when Alaska became a possession of the United States in 1867.

The next morning, July 2, brought us to Juneau, the principal city of southeastern Alaska, and the centre of an important mining region. It is on the mainland, and back of it is the celebrated Silver Bow Basin, while across the channel on Douglas Island is the great Treadwell mine which, taken together with the Mexican and the Ready Bullion properties, operated in connection with it, is, with probably not more than one exception, the largest gold-quartz mining plant in the world. Nearly 1,200 men are employed here, working in two shifts a day, and the adjacent mountainsides echo the ceaseless roar of 880 stamps, crushing ore that ranges from $2 to $7 a ton. The total product of this property since it began to be operated is variously estimated at from $12,000,000 to $20,000,000—twice as much, it is safe to say, as would



Hydraulic Mining, Silver Bow Basin



have paid the purchase price of the whole district of Alaska.

This great property has its romance, too. The story is that the Treadwell mine, while yet little more than a prospect hole, was forced upon a San Francisco builder, John Treadwell, in 1881, to satisfy a loan of $150. The Treadwell Company makes excellent provision for its men in the way of reading-rooms, bath houses, bowling alleys, billiard-rooms, lecture and amusement halls, and hospital accommodations. Only two holidays, Christmas and the Fourth of July, are recognised in these mines, the work being carried on day and night on all other days.

Juneau, which is across the narrow channel from the Treadwell mine, is the centre of a region in which there were at the time of our visit, 6,000 men engaged in mining and prospecting. New strikes and recent developments in what are known as the Nowell properties, recently transferred to the Treadwell Company, have combined with other things to give Juneau something of a boom. These new developments on the Nowell properties in Berner Bay, made during the summer of 1904, are said to open a still larger and richer deposit of gold quartz than that found in the Treadwell mines, and possibly the greatest gold-quartz deposit in the world.

Juneau is an incorporated town of about 2,000 people, thrifty, attractive in appearance, and gives promise of growth and stability. It is now the capital of Alaska, all the territorial offices having been removed there from Sitka except that of the governor, which remains at Sitka be-



Juneau in Winter

cause that is the home of the present governor. A change in the incumbency of the office would doubtless change the location of that office to this very picturesque city. Juneau takes its name from Joseph Juneau, a prospector, who won the confidence of the Indians, and learned from



"Mushing" over White Pass in 1898

them where they got the gold of their ornaments. They took him to what is now known as Silver Bow Basin, and then, requiring that he should become a tribesman and preserve their secret, it was with great difficulty that he escaped to Sitka to report his great find.

Late in the evening we approached what looked first like a small forest fire, but which we afterwards discovered to be mosquito smudges around the tents of the men engaged in clearing the ground for the new military post at Haines Mission. The Government was preparing here for a four-company post which is to be the principal military station in Alaska. As evidence of the fact that clearing the ground and improving a farm in that part of Alaska is a serious business, it cost the Government $195 an acre to clear the ground for the post.

When we awoke on the morning of July 3, the Dolphin lay at the dock in Skagway at the foot of the celebrated White Pass, over whose rugged and icy heights thousands of pilgrims to the Klondike Mecca, both men and women, struggled and toiled during the winter of 1897-98.



II

SKAGWAY TO DAWSON

HOME of the North Wind" is the translation furnished me for the Anglicised Indian word Skagway, applied to the town at the head of Lynn Canal, where the Alaska-bound senatorial party disembarked on the morning of July 3. But the north wind was not at home that day. The air was that of a charming summer morning in Minnesota, temperature about 65, the sky clear and blue. Of course the poetic idea expressed in the name of the place suggested its Indian origin and an Indian legend, and this is what they told me about it: An old Indian chief who lived here stood one day on shore watching his son trying to land in a canoe. The wind swept down the canyon with terrific force, but he was a strong lad and skilful, and his father had little fear. The boy was blown around the point, however, and out of sight. A little later his canoe was seen floating bottom up. Its late occupant was never found. And so the old chief named the place Skagua, which means Home of the North Wind. But the men who write waybills and mark freight boxes and spare not, have made it Skagway.

Skagway lies between the mountain slopes of a narrow canyon, up which the sea has crept until it can go no farther, although it seems to be making repeated efforts,



as the tide here in Lynn Canal rises sixteen to eighteen feet. Skagway is the port which our British neighbours were so anxious to get control of, as this is naturally the best entrance to Dawson and all the British Yukon. In the census of 1900 it had a population of 3,117; to-day about 1,200. At the time of the great excitement over the Klondike, in the winter of '97 and '98, this little valley from the water's edge to the foot of " Dead Horse Trail," two miles and a half up the Skagway River, was covered with the shacks and tents of 10,000 stampeders, trying to get their supplies packed over the trail or waiting for the completion of the wagon road then under construction.

In the long June and July days there is no lack of sunshine and daylight, even in this valley, but in winter, when the sun drops low in the southern sky, it seems almost to leap across the narrow opening toward the south from the mountain peak on the one side to the mountain peak on the other. It is visible only about twenty minutes on the shortest days and the stores and offices keep the electric lights burning practically all day from November to March.

Captain Moore, a citizen of Canada, who had been prospecting for gold in the Canadian northwest in the year 1886, was far-seeing enough to discover that the White Pass would be the most feasible gateway to the British interior, in case important gold discoveries should be made there, and attempted to homestead the present site of Skagway. When he applied to the Canadian

authorities for the privilege, he was notified that the land was not on British territory, but belonged to the United States, and that he must obtain his rights from that Government. This his son subsequently did, but in that transaction the British authorities placed themselves on record as recognising the title of the United States to territory which Canada afterwards claimed, but doubtless never would have claimed if it had not been for the Klondike discoveries.

Skagway was found to be literally swathed in bunting. This, however, was not all on account of the arrival of the senatorial party. Next day was the Fourth of July and an elaborate programme of parades, speeches, games and a sham battle was carried out by these disfranchised Americans in Alaska, who seem to take more interest in the national holiday and in the old-time patriotic celebration than we do in the States.

Monday morning, July 6, our party took the train on the White Pass and Yukon route for Dawson. This is a narrow-gauge road, financed by British capital, but constructed and operated by Americans. It follows at the outset the route taken by the wagon road, the construction of which was commenced by George A. Brackett, of Minneapolis, in the fall of 1897, and carried by him nearly to the summit of the range before the railroad company had organised and overtaken him. The wagon road was sold out to the railroad company and the railroad was completed within a year from Skagway to White Horse, a distance of 112 miles. It climbs within a track distance of 20





White Horse Rapids



miles from tide water to a height of 2,940 feet, with a maximum grade of 4 per cent. and an average of 3 per cent. The ride over the White Pass route is an experience to be remembered, not that the engineering difficulties overcome here are greater than those mastered by builders of the mountain roads in the States, but the sensation of bold mountain ascent is enhanced by the quick transition from sea level to the snow-capped mountain summit. While scaling the walls of the rugged canyon occasional glimpses may be had of the distant sea far below at the mouth of the gorge. As the train proceeds along its narrow roadway around the face of a projecting cliff its movement seems more like a flight through air than a hard and difficult climb up a mountainside. A foaming stream plunges downward through the gorge, while on the opposite side of the canyon beautiful cascades drop their silvery veils hundreds of feet down the face of the mountain. Winding along the opposite precipice one may catch occasional glimpses of the old "Dead Horse Trail," over which thousands of resolute men and women struggled under the burden of their heavy packs, conveying by repeated trips across the summit the scanty supply of food which was to sustain their lives until they had found their fortunes in the sands and gravel of the Klondike basin. Horses were employed in great numbers on this trail, and cruelty unspeakable was visited upon these faithful beasts. Insufficiently fed, they often staggered under their loads of 200 or 250 pounds, lost their footing on the narrow, icy path and were dashed to

death below, while hundreds of others met a more cruel fate in wicked desertion in midwinter by their owners on the bleak and wind-swept waste of the northern slopes.

After a long, hard pull of about twenty miles and lasting three hours, the violent throbbing of the engine suddenly ceases and the train comes to a halt at the summit, where two flags float from tall poles set about twenty-five feet apart. Between them, driven into a crevice in the rocks, is an iron stake, the inscription on the top of which tells us that here is the boundary line between the United States and Canada. Since the arbitrators have decided the Alaska boundary dispute the iron stake has given place to an aluminum-bronze post about two and one-half feet in height, whose forked base is set firmly with cement in holes drilled in the solid rock. Similar posts placed when practicable at intervals of half a mile, will mark the entire boundary between Alaska and the British possessions.

Here, at the very outset of our journey through British territory to the great mining camp of the north, are found those representatives of Canadian authority whose presence brings a sense of security to the law-abiding man and a feeling of terror to evil-doers—the Northwest Mounted Police. We shall meet with them frequently and learn more of their organisation and its wonderful efficiency, but that they are here holding the first foot of territory to which their Government can lay valid claim is as significant as the fact that there are no representatives of American authority within twenty miles.

The first stop is at Lake Bennett, now merely a station



and a watering place, but once the site of a city of tents. Here, at the head of this lake, in the spring of '98, 5,000 men and women camped waiting for transportation down



Bishop Bompas

the lake on barges or on rafts, flat boats, scows or canoes of their own construction. The advent of the railroad changed all that and carried this traffic eighty-five miles farther to a point just below the White Horse rapids.

On the way we stop again at Caribou Crossing, the point at which boats are taken for the Atlin mining district. Here is a little settlement and from a log cabin squatted on the sand at the water's edge come an old gentleman, clad in the garb of a bishop of the Episcopal Church, and his wife, a sweet-faced, little old lady, who is to take leave of him at the station as he starts on one of his missionary tours among the English churches and Indian missions along the Yukon. Bishop William Bompas of the Selkirk diocese came from England in 1865 to relieve a missionary stationed at Port Simpson, which was then an important trading post of the Hudson Bay company. He remained at Port Simpson until 1874, when he returned to England and brought out his bride, the delicate and gentle, but courageous and faithful little woman who dismisses him now on his long journey with many little attentions and admonitions as to the care of himself while on his mission. Bishop Bompas is now 70 years old; his diocese extends through the Yukon territory and a part of northern British Columbia. His life has been spent chiefly among the Indians. He pays a tribute of praise to the Hudson Bay company in its relations to the Indians, speaks of the good faith which that institution has always maintained with them and of the assistance which it has rendered the church in its missionary work among them. For over forty years he has travelled along the rivers and over the Indian trails in summer and in winter, in canoes and on snowshoes and with dog teams, with Indians for his guides and com-

panions, and has found these simple people models of hospitality and kindness and devotion, where not corrupted by the white man. He does not regard his life thus spent as one of hardship. It has brought him health and much happiness. He speaks with enthusiasm of the beauties of the rivers and mountains, and of the beautiful valley of the Peace River lying within the borders of his extensive diocese. But it is with considerable difficulty that he is persuaded to tell us something of his long journeys over the cold and trackless expanse traversed by the great Mackenzie, to whose mouth on the Arctic Ocean his mission to the native hunters and trappers has carried him on more than one occasion. His tones are low and his manner diffident as he yields with apparent reluctance to every effort to obtain from him a story of his life on the far frontier. His hand fumbles nervously among the straps of his leathern bags trimmed with Indian beadwork, the thank-offering of his devoted and affectionate Indian followers. Caribou Crossing, so remote, so dreary and desolate to the traveller, does not seem so unattractive to the quaint and cheery old lady, who has for over thirty years shared the fortunes and the hardships which have fallen to the lot of this servant of the church. " It is very nice here," she says. " I like it better on the other side of the river," pointing to her humble cabin set on the opposite bank. " It is not so sandy over there."

Left to himself, the bishop spends much time in reading the " Dictionary of the Church of England " and one who knows something of his history informs me that he

is an author of some note in church circles, prominent among his works being one entitled "Northern Lights on the Bible." He travelled with us the remainder of the day and the next and it was noticed that as Indian settlements are passed along the river he seemed to be recognised from shore and his hands are lifted and his lips move, as if in benediction of the rude and simple people who seem to be greeting him as he passes.

White Horse, the terminus of the railroad on the Lewes River, is a neat Canadian village where are great warehouses in which have been stored large quantities of provisions and other supplies, including unusual shipments of heavy machinery waiting for the opening of the river. The movement of mining machinery is just now particularly heavy, because for a short time the Dominion Government has remitted the duties in order to encourage the introduction of machinery into the mining regions. The distinguishing features of the village are extensive warehouses along the river bank from which the Dawson boats are loaded; a station of the Northwest Mounted Police, with substantial log barracks laid out in military style and kept with military neatness and cleanliness; grounds prepared for baseball, cricket, tennis and other outdoor sports of which the Britishers are so fond; a reading-room well equipped, a Government telegraph station and a number of substantial store buildings; and everywhere there is that trimness and orderliness which evidence the efficient administration of authority.

In the early evening we go aboard the Yukoner, a

boat belonging to the same company which operates the railroad, and forming part of its line between Skagway and Dawson. These boats are equal to any on the upper Mississippi, furnish comfortable accommodations, serve excellent meals and rob travel on the Yukon and its tributaries of every anticipated hardship. The first-class passenger fare from Seattle to Dawson over this route is $80 and from Dawson to Seattle $100. The difference is due mainly to the longer time required for the trip up the river.

In these long, early July days the sun stays with us until nearly 10 o'clock and returns before three, while its slanting rays seem to lighten the upper air the whole night through.

There is so much to interest and so much of daylight to improve that sleep comes only after repeated invitations and one is reminded of the expressive remark of a returning Yukoner who has been spending the winter in the States, and whose husband awaits her at Dawson. With a genuine Bowery accent she speaks of the unbroken daylight of midsummer and adds that humankind are not the only ones inconvenienced on their first arrival by inability to sleep. The imported animals and fowls, too, seem at first to experience the same confusion of the orderly habits which prevail elsewhere, for, says she, "there is no night and de very chickens, why dey walks demselves to det." And just at this time not only is the sunlight almost constant, but during the sun's short absences the moon shines with an effulgence which seems



Typical Upper Yukon Craft in 1898

never to have been observed in lower latitudes, and tempts the man with the camera to try its effects upon the sensitised film in the middle of the night, with results which are highly satisfactory as photographs, although they cannot be so successfully reproduced in half-tones.

Midnight of July 7 finds us at Fort Selkirk on the bank of the Lewes River, upon which we have travelled from White Horse northwestward to the Pelly, which here comes in from the east and together with the Lewes makes up the Yukon. Selkirk is an old Hudson Bay trading post and we are interested in it in passing because we are told that here are located the most successful farms in the British Yukon. One farmer at this point is reported to have made a clear profit of $3,000 during the past year on his crops of hay and potatoes, for which he finds a market in Dawson. His success is said to be encouraging others to seek their fortunes in agriculture at this point as surer than prospecting for gold along the creeks.

The Yukon is a deep, rapid stream, carrying more water here than flows in the Mississippi between the St. Croix and Lake Pepin. Its banks are high, and, for the most part, wooded with stunted spruce and birch and large willows, affording ample fuel supply and serviceable in mining, but not large enough to make merchantable lumber in any considerable quantity. The upper Yukon boats are supplied with fuel from woodyards located at convenient intervals. Two or three times a day the boat is tied to the shore while the Indian deckhands take on ten or fifteen cords for the furnaces for the next run.



Travelling on the Yukon

Here in its upper stretches the river flows among hills which rise at times almost to the dignity of mountains, and which are often covered well up their slopes with spruce and birch. There are no evidences of animal life visible except a few birds. Among these are the robin, the thrush, the meadow lark and the eagle. Deer, caribou, mountain sheep and bears are found on the mountains and the rivers abound in fish, of which the most common are the greyling and the salmon.

One can almost persuade himself, on this journey down the great Yukon, that he is an original explorer, wandering in the primeval wilds. Nature is unmarred by the hand of man and the vast solitude is impressive. Occasionally, at intervals of hours, there may be seen a solitary cabin of a woodchopper and at long intervals on the upper stretches of this lonesome stream, flowing forever, silent and deep, toward the north, we find the cabins of a Mounted Police station, or a group of three or four tents occupied by ten or a dozen Indians, who come to the Yukon in summer to fish, but that is all. The scene is never uninteresting, however. The river is tortuous and rapid, its banks generally green with luxuriant vegetation and the meadows gay with an endless variety of flowers, one species known as the fire weed spreading a flame-like colour over patches of hundreds of acres of sloping country. Again the river leaves the rolling meadow lands and pours its flood against the solid masonry of earth on whose seared and broken face is written for the geologist the history of time. Narrow gorges are entered



"Wooding up" on the Yukon

and at one place we are treated to the sensation of "running the rapids" through which the widest channel between the rocky walls is scarcely more than twice the width of our well-handled boat.

If we are of a practical turn of mind, we may question the economy of nature and wonder whether these immense areas of unpeopled wilderness will ever serve any human purpose, or whether they are only the foundations of earth upon which have been built the habitable and inhabited portions of the world. The face of nature is fair enough, surely, at this season, and sufficiently productive of vegetable life to suggest the possibility that this country may some day be made practical use of by others than the daring seekers after gold. But nature has other moods and her wintry aspect is not so kindly. Still, I am inclined to think that, if the treasures of gold hold out, man, with his wonderful powers of adaptation, will utilise considerable areas of the unquestionably fertile valley lands of this region in producing many of the vegetables and dairy and meat products which the mining camps must now transport over thousands of miles at great expense. But of the agricultural possibilities of these northern lands, and particularly of Alaska, I shall present some evidence on a later page.

As we pass the mouth of the White River flowing in from the west we observe the appropriateness of its name, for it immediately imparts to the Yukon its own colour, and from that point to its mouth the waters of the Yukon boil and roll the sands and mud of the soft bottom as does

the Missouri throughout the greater part of its course. At the mouth of the Stewart River we pass the scene of the earliest important mining operations on the British Yukon, where placer mining was carried on prior to 1887, after which the Forty-Mile district nearer Dawson became the centre of interest until the Klondike overshadowed everything else.

Dawson is reached in the afternoon of July 8. It lies on a broad, gently sloping bench under an encircling hill on the right bank of the river. Its site is that of an old glacier. As it comes into view it has the appearance of a considerable city. Conspicuous objects are the large warehouses of the transportation and trading companies. Along the shore numerous river boats lie against the bank, and our landing is effected across the decks of two other boats. While the early rush has preceded us, the arrival of the boat from the upper river is still an object of interest. Men struggle through the crowd and come rushing on board to greet the new arrivals; wives and children who have been "outside" all winter meet husbands and fathers, and friends clasp hands with friends with many demonstrations of joy at the ending of the long and distant separation.

As you step ashore you will probably experience a feeling that you are a little farther "out of the world" than you have ever been before, although you may have been something of a globe-trotter. In spite of the throng and the sight of a face or two that you may have known before and although you hear your own language, Dawson,

lying almost upon the Arctic Circle, had always seemed to me one of the most remote outposts on the edge of the habitable world. But how accessible after all—in summer one thousand miles of the quiet waters of the "inside passage" from Seattle to Skagway occupying four days;



Five Finger Rapids on the Upper Yukon

112 miles of railroad travel over the coast range requiring about ten hours; and 450 miles down the Lewes and the Yukon from White Horse to Dawson consuming less than two days; in winter the last division of this route, between White Horse and Dawson, is covered by stages and sleds drawn by horses and accommodating nine passengers. Roadhouses are maintained at frequent intervals and the tri-weekly stages are well patronised.

III

A "CHEE-CHA-KO" IN THE KLONDIKE

IN Dawson you are either tolerated as a "Chee-cha-ko" or you have established social standing as a "Sour Dough." Pedigree, which is often worth so much in other places, "cuts no ice" where that commodity is perpetual at a depth of two feet. Indeed, it is wiser, as a rule, not to enquire too closely into antecedents or pedigree, and as for money as a guarantee of social position—any one is likely to have that to-morrow if he hasn't got it to-day. A "Chee-cha-ko" is only a tenderfoot, but to belong to the real aristocracy of the "Sour Dough" one must have spent a year "inside" and have some personal experience of a winter in a Yukon or Alaskan mining camp.

The senatorial "Chee-cha-kos" who landed in Dawson July 8, were expected—for Dawson has telegraphic communication with the outside world and daily newspapers—and were very cordially received. The warmth of the welcome extended to the representatives of the United States Senate was nowhere more marked in Alaska than here on the British side under the Union Jack. A majority of the people of Dawson, if now subjects of the crown, were at one time citizens of the United States, but it would be ungracious to suggest that that fact had any bear-

ing upon the interest aroused by the arrival of this official party.

The first sensation experienced in Dawson was that of surprise at the size and appearance of the town. With a population of about 7,000, with streets solidly built up for nearly a mile along the river, and business extending back from the river front to Third Street; with graded streets, water service and sidewalks and comfortable log and frame storehouses and dwellings, the impression created is one of solidity and permanence, which I venture to say is not generally entertained by those who have not seen this metropolis of the Yukon. There are no stone buildings and but one brick building in the town, so far as I observed, and not a square yard of plastering. Dawson is built on what is doubtless an old glacier, now covered with a deposit of earth and gravel, washed down from the encircling hills. Two feet beneath the surface the excavator strikes the perpetual ice. Foundations laid upon the ice are necessarily insecure. While the general surface of the ground does not thaw out to a depth of more than two feet in summer, an excavation results in further thawing of the surface at that point and a consequent settling of the foundations, which are raised again by the freezing in winter. The outer foundations, too, are subject to greater variations than those under the centre of the building and particularly those on the south side, so that, while there may be little change by reason of freezing or thawing in some parts of the building, in other parts there is considerable. This would ultimately



The Governor's Residence in Dawson

destroy a building constructed of brick or stone and loosen the plastering on the walls of a wooden building.

Nearly all kinds of mercantile business are carried on in Dawson. The leaders, of course, are the old Yukon River trading and transportation companies. These are the Northern Commercial company, and the North American Transportation and Trading company. These companies bring their stock of goods up the Yukon River from St. Michael, and were engaged in business here before the White Pass road opened a shorter route. They do a freighting and transportation business on the river and were the beneficiaries of a large trade before the Klondike was discovered. Their establishments are, in reality, department stores; they carry everything needed, from a miner's thawing machine to a watch; from Indian mukluks to jewelry and laces; from hard-tack and bacon to gentlemen's dress suits, in one of which a member of our party—not prepared to find that such things are required up near the pole—was arrayed for the governor's social function. It cannot be said of Dawson that business is very lively there just now. The boom is over, but there is a fair volume of trade on a reasonably permanent basis. During the summer of 1904 Dawson and the Klondike district are said to have lost 2,000 to 3,000 people by the rush to the new diggings at Fairbanks on the Tanana. But that is the fortune of the mining camp; a large part of its floating population is here to-day and gone to-morrow.

The public buildings of Dawson are exceedingly credit-

able. They consist of the post-office, which serves the postal department on the first floor and the customs and other Dominion departments on the second; a fine eight-room public-school building; what is known as the administration building—the office building of the Yukon territory; the municipal courthouse; the governor's elegant residence; the Mounted Police barracks and others. The schoolhouse cost $40,000, the administration building $50,000, and altogether about $250,000 have been expended here in public buildings. Dawson is not without churches, and the strict observance of Sunday is something worthy of remark, although not unusual under the British flag. The day following our arrival witnessed great demonstrations of welcome in honour of Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army, whose organisation has a strong garrison at this point. Miss Booth during her stay was a guest of the governor and his wife, and was honoured with an official address of welcome.

Dawson lies north of the 64th degree of north latitude and experiences as wide differences of temperature, probably, as are known in any inhabited portion of the globe. The thermometer had registered 90 above a few days before our arrival and two days of our stay were uncomfortably hot at midday. In winter 60 or 70 below is not a very rare experience. And yet the "Sour Doughs" speak with real enthusiasm of the winter climate. "It is all right here in winter," said our hospitable host at the Regina, "except when it moderates sometimes and the temperature rises to 25 or 30 below. You see, it feels so

much like spring our people foolishly expose themselves and catch cold." I can bear no testimony to Dawson's winter climate; I am only a " Chee-cha-ko "; but I can testify as to five perfectly glorious days there in July.

I was surprised, too, to find the markets so well supplied with fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and all kinds of provisions, though not at prices which prevail in Minneapolis. For instance, eggs were quoted, as the market reporters say, at $1 to $1.50 a dozen; butter, $1 a pound; flour, $14 a barrel; beef, 50 to 80 cents a pound by the quarter; ham, 42 cents; bread, two loaves for 25 cents; sugar, 10 cents a pound; oranges, 50 cents to $1 a dozen; potatoes, 10 cents, although a short time prior they were 18 to 20 cents a pound. These are summer prices, when transportation is open. In winter they are multiplied by two or three, if the supply hasn't run out. Shoes and clothing may be obtained almost as cheaply as in Seattle, but anything that is of a perishable character costs money, and this is true of some things that are not perishable. Hay has been as high as $300 a ton in Dawson, and was quoted at from $80 to $90 at the time of our visit, and other kinds of feed and forage at corresponding prices. It costs so much to feed a horse in Dawson in winter that it is cheaper to shoot the horse in the fall and import a new one in the spring, and that is sometimes done. Lumber is $50 a thousand; hardware prices correspond. That one of the senatorial party hesitated to order more than one egg for his first breakfast lest he might soon exhaust the committee's ap-



Looking Northwest down the Yukon

propriation, may be explained by the fact that there have been times when eggs were worth $2 apiece in Dawson.

In this far-away, isolated country the people are thrown almost wholly upon their own resources for their winter amusement, which becomes a necessity to successful resistance of the depression which often seizes upon those who are shut off so completely from sharing in the pleasures and occupations of the outside world. It therefore follows that Dawson has a good theatre, an athletic clubhouse for winter sports and athletic grounds well prepared for baseball, cricket and tennis. The champions of the prize ring find many interested in their exhibitions here and the event of the week prior to our arrival had been a fight to a finish. A peculiar institution is the town crier, known as "Uncle John," who parades the streets with a megaphone, an improvement on a bell, and announces the hour and place of forthcoming events. The long midsummer days simplify the arrangements of this character materially. The baseball crank and the office boy are not compelled to devise excuses for neglect of their business in the middle of the afternoon in order to witness a baseball game. The game does not begin until 8 o'clock in the evening, and the theatre, recognising it as a stiff competitor, does not ring up its curtain until 10 o'clock. This means, of course, that the play is not over until 12.30 or 1 A. M., but inasmuch as the night is nearly as light as the day no inconvenience is suffered on that account. It necessarily follows, however, that business is not generally resumed as early the next morning as it is where the occupations of

the day are taken care of during the day and those of the night are given their proper hours.

It was a " Chee-cha-ko," of course, who, when asked if he wanted to " see the town," said: " Yes, of course, but I never go to 'see the town' by daylight." He was informed that he must see it by daylight or not at all; or, he might wait six months, when he couldn't see it by daylight, unless he was mighty quick about it. Dawson is on a parallel with the centre of Iceland, and the winter days are so short that school children are obliged to carry lanterns to light their way to and from school. You may be surprised to find that Dawson has about 400 pupils in her public school, and that as evidence of the up-to-dateness with which they are conducted they are thoroughly trained in the fire drill. Dawson also boasts a Carnegie public library, the one nearest to the North Pole.

The town of Dawson extends back from the river bank half a mile and well up the slopes of the encircling hill or mountain, the extreme summit of which is called the dome. Here on the 21st of June great crowds repair to witness the midnight sun. Visitors are promised a grand prospect from this dome and up its steep ascent Mr. Brackett, Senator Patterson, of Colorado, and I climbed, one bright, clear day. The distance from the hotel to the summit is about three miles, but the magnificent view afforded from this elevation was worth the effort. Stretching away to the northwest could be traced the winding course of the Yukon on its way to its extreme northern point at Fort

Yukon, where it crosses the Arctic Circle. On the north and east were visible, nearly 100 miles away, the snowy peaks of the great world's ridge, which sweeps northward from the plateau of Mexico, rises into the heights of the Rockies and is perpetuated in the northern chain of mountains across British America to the Arctic Ocean. On the southeast lies the valley of the Klondike and its tributaries, the great gold field, which has lured tens of thousands of eager and hopeful "argonauts" and which, since its discovery eight years ago, has contributed over $100,000,000 to the world's supply of the precious metal.

If any one brings to Dawson the idea that life and property are not safe in this community, that desperate characters throng the streets and that disorder prevails day and night, he will soon discover his mistake. A more orderly, law-abiding community it would be difficult to find. There was no key to my room at the hotel and when I asked for one it was found with difficulty. "We never think of locking our doors here," was the explanation, and I found this to be true in private houses, as well as in public. I began to look around me for the reason. Surely, I thought, the leopards who come to this far-away country have not changed their spots; there must be among the promiscuous throng some thieves; crime can hardly have lost its attractions for all the adventurers who flock to this far frontier. If this were simply a mining camp with only a few tents, where justice was administered in the rude and simple way usually pursued where society is but crudely organised, such confidence in the safety of

one's possessions wherever he might leave them would not appear so remarkable, but this is a city of 7,000 people.

I found the reason I was looking for at the south end of the city, where were flying the flags of the Northwest Mounted Police. Here are the barracks of this splendid organisation under the command of Major Z. T. Wood, whose initials stand for the name of a former president of the United States, from whom he is descended. Major Wood is from Nova Scotia, but there courses through his veins the blood of Zachary Taylor. His family removed to Halifax after the war on account of their irreconcilable feeling towards its results. In 1895 when the Forty-Mile district on the British side was attracting attention as a mining region, the Dominion Government sent up a small force of Northwest Mounted Police to administer law and preserve order. So inaccessible was this country at that time from Canada that by special permission of our Government these men were brought by the way of St. Michael and up the Yukon. To-day there are fifty-five police stations in the Yukon territory having three men each, besides the garrisons at Dawson and White Horse. These stations are scattered along the Yukon and through the mining districts. A weekly patrol is maintained between Dawson and White Horse, from outpost to outpost, and at all the roadhouses on the winter trail which connects these posts a register is kept where the passengers are required to register at every stop, in order that when it may be necessary to locate any one for whom enquiry is made, his whereabouts at certain times

may be definitely known. Every boat, scow or skiff leaving the upper lakes for Dawson in summer or leaving Dawson for the lower river, is registered and the names and addresses of the passengers taken. In all cases of



Northwest Mounted Police

accidents resulting in death and in cases of suicide and murder the police exercise not only the duties of a police magistrate but of coroner and make full enquiry. On the arrival of boats they assist the customs officers and in Dawson serve as a police force for that city. The men are enlisted for five years with the privilege of re-enlistment for one, two or three years, as they desire. This

force is recruited largely from the best families of England and Canada and includes not only fine specimens of manhood, physically, but among the number are men from the great universities and colleges.

Dawson is not a no-license town; dance-halls and bar-rooms are sufficiently numerous, and other resorts of vice, all under close restraint. Public gambling is not tolerated, and Major Wood, who is a member, by virtue of his office, of the Yukon council, introduced, while we were there, a bill to prevent women from frequenting bar-rooms, to deny to dance-halls the power to take out liquor licenses, prohibit public gambling, to close all side doors and back doors, chutes and dumb waiters, to remove screens during the prohibited hours and closing saloons from 12 o'clock Saturday night until 6 o'clock Monday morning. The penalties range from $50 to $100, with forfeiture of license for a second offence. Of course, this measure provoked a loud roar of protest from the saloon-keepers and gamblers and the dance-hall proprietors, but the bill represented the ideas of a department which has a high reputation for efficiency, and if the council saw fit to enact into law what he proposed for the promotion of the peace of Dawson, Major Wood has the power and the disposition to enforce it.

During the summer of 1904, the Yukon council submitted to the voters of Dawson a proposition to rescind the charter of the city and take the administration of the affairs of the town into the hands of the council. A large number of the most important interests favoured

such action because the municipal government had become extravagant, and the proposition was adopted by a large majority. More recently the police authorities decided that there were too many saloons in Dawson and on the creeks and closed thirty-five of them in one day, an incident suggestive of the arbitrary manner in which authority is sometimes exercised by this organisation. This might not do on the American side, but it "goes" in the British territories. At the same time the need of a more efficient police service in Alaska is recognised and Judge Day, who investigated conditions in the district in the summer of 1904, is understood to have recommended the organisation of a mounted constabulary somewhat after the order of the Northwest Mounted Police, though not clothed with such arbitrary power as that organisation exercises in the territories of the Dominion.

Dawson has two daily papers. The *Yukon World* is the Government organ; the *News*, a vigorous and prosperous opposition paper, stands for the enlargement of the element of home rule in the Territorial Government. It is set on a Mergenthaler machine, affords a photo-engraving plant which produces first-class results, and serves its readers with an average of four to eight pages a day at a cost of $24 a year, single copies 25 cents. This is the ruling price of all newspapers in Alaska and the Yukon, whether daily or weekly. The same charge is made for newspapers from the States, and magazines which can be bought in Minneapolis for 10 cents cost 50 cents on the Yukon.

I have spoken of the courteous reception accorded the visiting senators by the officials of the territory. Our entire party was favoured with an invitation to a formal dinner at the executive mansion, where Commissioner Congdon served to sixteen or eighteen gentlemen, including territorial and municipal officials, as well as the United States consul and the visiting senators from the States, a dinner as elegantly appointed as I have ever partaken of anywhere. The floral decorations were particularly tasteful and varied, including specimens of at least a dozen varieties of flowers. The executive mansion is a handsome frame structure, thoroughly modern, electric-lighted, finished throughout in British Columbia fir in its native tints and contains the private office of the governor, a billiard-room, a reception-room, spacious parlours, a state dining-room, large chambers and a grand hall and stairway.

The British Yukon enjoys something which American Alaska is asking for and is destined to secure in time. The British Yukon is an organised territory, having a governor, who is known as the commissioner of Yukon territory, three judges and an executive council or legislature consisting of five members elected and five appointed or ex-officio. The governor is also appointed and presides over the sessions of the council, giving the appointed members a majority of one. When the territory was first organised the council contained but two elective members. Constant agitation, however, in favour of home rule has enlarged the elective membership to five and the agitation, still con-

tinuing, is likely to increase that number. The Yukon also has a delegate in Parliament, another boon for which Alaska prays without division of sentiment. The territory has a full complement of officers, including a gold commissioner, land agent and a superintendent of roads. Three years' residence is necessary in order to vote and then the franchise may not be exercised except by full citizens. It is estimated that 65 per cent. of the population are Americans—that is to say, from the States. No taxes are levied on property outside of incorporated towns, but a liberal territorial revenue is derived from the export tax on gold of 2 1-2 per cent. In the incorporated towns taxes for municipal purposes are levied on property on the valuation basis.

The second day of our stay in Dawson was devoted to the mines. As the guests of M. L. Washburn of the Northern Commercial company and T. A. McGowan, United States consul, our party was driven in road wagons eighteen miles up Bonanza and Eldorado creeks through the heart of the Klondike mining region. The British Yukon has the best system of wagon roads to be found in any mining district in the world. These roads are built by the Dominion Government, and the enterprise displayed in construction and maintenance is an object lesson the value of which should not be lost on our Government.

While we were waiting to take the train at Skagway an Indian dressed in the ordinary garb of the white man, but very drunk and very tearful, addressed himself to nearly every one on the platform, expressing his grief in badly



Street Scene in Grand Forks

broken English over the death of his mother. It appears that his mother had died a long time before, but he was indulging in a new burst of grief, along with some other things conducive to mellowness, and seeking sympathy wherever he could for his forlorn condition. This weeping inebriate was "Skookum Jim," and "Skookum Jim" was in at the beginning of things when gold was discovered on Bonanza Creek in 1896. "Skookum," by the way, means big.

Of course there are rival claimants for the honour of having made the original discovery in the Klondike.

Robert Henderson has applied to the Dominion Government for recognition as the original discoverer, basing his title on the representation that he had sluice boxes in operation on Hunker Creek in July, 1896. At that time it was known as All Gold. He says that after staking his claims he returned to Ogilvie for supplies. Securing an outfit he started down the Yukon again for his claim. At the mouth of the Klondike River he came upon George Carmack and his Indian associates, "Skookum Jim" and "Tagish Charley." He advised them to go over with him to All Gold and Gold Bottom and take some claims. They did so, and then started back across the divide to Bonanza Creek, then known as Rabbit Creek. As they left, Henderson requested them, if they found any good-looking prospects on Rabbit Creek, to send him word and he would pay the messenger for his services. Henderson says that on that return trip to the river Carmack panned on the rim rock of Rabbit Creek with



George A. Brackett Washing out a Pan

sensational results, and was so excited over his discovery that he forgot to send back the messenger, but hastened on to Forty-Mile, where he recorded as the discoverer of the district. When Henderson went to Forty-Mile a little later he was notified that Carmack had already filed the first, or discovery, claim. Henderson claims, however, that his original discovery was entitled to be regarded as the discovery claim because it has since paid a royalty on $450,000, and afterwards was sold for $200,000, and is still a valuable property. The honour of discovery is not empty, as the original discoverer is allowed to stake the next claim above or below on the same creek.

George Carmack's story, however, which is more popularly accepted as the true version of the original discovery, is that while he and the Indians "Skookum Jim" and "Tagish Charley" were fishing for salmon at the mouth of the Klondike they decided, the catch not being very satisfactory, to go back on the creeks along the Klondike and do a little prospecting. They strolled up the Klondike River, panning for gold here and there but with indifferent success, until noon on August 16. When they stopped for lunch they noticed what seemed to be very favourable indications on the exposed rim of the left bank of what is now known as Bonanza Creek. A pan produced surprising results. In a little while they had washed out over $12. The following day they staked a claim covering the site of their discovery and one each side of it. They then went down to the mouth of the Klondike River, and on the present site of Dawson built a raft on which

they floated down the Yukon to Forty-Mile, where there was a considerable mining camp and the territorial headquarters. They filed their claims and told what they had found. Their reputations for veracity were not high, but the next morning nearly every man who had heard their story at Forty-Mile was on his way to the Klondike.

The news did not reach the outside world until the next summer, 1897, but it spread rapidly up and down the Yukon and the stampede was soon on. Eight years have brought into the country, first and last, 50,000 to 75,000 people, developed a mining district 800 square miles in extent, and established a trade which is eagerly sought for by the coast cities on both sides of the international boundary.

The work on Bonanza and Eldorado creeks, where the first gold strikes were made, consists now largely of working over the gravel which was panned and sluiced and rocked in the first handling, bringing out only the coarse gold. Dredging machines, hoisting machines, and hydraulic giants make it possible to handle so much larger quantities in the same time and at so much less expense to the yard that ground which it was once thought had been worked out with the pan and rocker is now producing rich returns on the best claims. As evidence of the fact that the Klondike gravels are still believed to be valuable when handled by the cheaper and more reliable methods of extracting the gold, a group of sixty claims, comprising practically all of Golden Hill, at the junction of Eldorado and Bonanza creeks, was sold in one trans-

action to one company for $562,500, in September, 1904. This ground has been worked over more or less by the cruder methods, but treated by the hydraulic system is still regarded as very valuable.

Bonanza and Eldorado creeks are small streams and the water supply is entirely inadequate. Some attempt has been made toward carrying water from other sources of supply through pipes and sluice boxes to where it is needed for washing out the gravel, and improvements in that direction would greatly increase the output.

Stops were made at various claims along the way, the noon hour finding us at No. 26 above on Eldorado, the property of Stanley & Worden. Mr. Stanley, who had been a fellow traveller on the way from Seattle to Skagway, was the discoverer of this claim and with his partner owns one adjoining, which they were putting through the second handling with a steam hoist, with extremely satisfactory results. There was no clean-up at this claim, but Mr. Brackett washed out a couple of pans of gravel from the bed rock and secured from one about $1 and from the other about $1.50. As there are 90 to 100 pans in a cubic yard, this is rich dirt and afforded some idea of what it is to dig for gold in the Klondike when you have "struck it rich." A stretch of three and a half miles on this creek, Eldorado, is said to have produced over $30,000,000.

At another claim visited shortly afterward a pan, taken at random, turned out $3. The operation of a big dredger furnished an illustration of placer mining by



"Chee-cha-ko" Hill in the Klondike

machinery, and at another group of mines we were invited to witness a clean-up on property owned and managed by a man known as "Skipper" Norwood, at one time the captain of a sailing vessel, and the first whaler to voluntarily winter in the Arctic Ocean. When one of his sluice boxes, which had been running about two days, was cleaned up there was taken from it a small pailful of gold, the value of which was stated by the experts to be about $4,000. This was well up the side of the ravine, on what is called a hill claim.

In the Klondike the gold is comparatively coarse; that is, it is in the form of grains from the size of very coarse cornmeal to grains of rice, cracked hominy, peas and full grains of corn, with occasional larger pieces, as large sometimes as twenty-dollar gold pieces. This gravel may either be washed out by the use of a pan about the size and shape of an old-fashioned milkpan, or in what are known as rockers or in sluice boxes. Panning consists of taking a pan half full of gravel, stooping over the running water in the stream, wetting the gravel, shaking it until the larger stones come to the surface, throwing them off by hand and gradually working down the gravel until only fine sand remains, the contents being repeatedly dipped in the water to cause the earth and decomposed rock to flow off. Finally the contents are reduced to a mere handful and on one side of the pan. This is carefully washed in the stream and as the dirt flows out the gold will be found lying on the bottom of the pan, if the gravel contained any. It takes about ten or twelve minutes to wash out a pan of gravel

carefully, so that ore which produces 50 cents to $1 or $1.50 a pan makes pretty good wages. On the very rich strikes, of course, it produces more, running as high sometimes as $100 to the pan. The rocker is a different contrivance: a wooden box is made to rock in such a way as to sift down the gold, which is always heavier than gravel, while the refuse is worked off through an opening near the bottom. A sluice box operated by two men is known as a "Long Tom"; it is eight to twelve feet in length. One man shovels in the gravel on one side and the other one, with a dipper on a long pole, throws in the water from the other side. The gravel is sluiced out through the lower end and the gold is gathered in the bottom, either on riffles, or on a blanket, when it is in the form of fine dust, or by the aid of quicksilver.



"Skipper" Norwood

Where water is more abundant and operations are carried on on a larger scale, the sluice boxes are from 50 to 150 feet long, a rapid current of water is turned through them, the gravel is shovelled into the sluice box by several men and the rapid current works the sand and the pebbles and loose dirt down the sluice and out at the lower end; the gold, in the meantime, collecting on what are known as riffles on the bottom of the sluice or trough. These riffles are generally a sort of lattice work made to fit in the bottom of the sluice box, and removable. Iron riffles are also used in the form of sections of grating fitted into the bottom of the sluice box and removed when the clean-up is made.

To the inexperienced observer the method of sluicing seems like a very wasteful process, and as if quite as much gold might be washed out by the rapid flow of the water as collects in the bottom of the box. But experience justifies the process. Gold is very heavy and after the sluice boxes are cleared and the riffles removed, a strong current may be allowed to pass over the gold in the bottom and wash it clean of all dirt and sand without carrying any of it away. This, of course, is where the gold is coarse, as it is in the Klondike. In other gold fields, where the gold is in the form of fine dust, such methods cannot, of course, be pursued. There the gold dust must be gathered by the aid of quicksilver, with which it forms an amalgam, and from which the quicksilver must be released by being subjected to heat.

The great problem of the Klondike region to-day is that

of water, and if the Government of the Yukon could do as much for the miners in that region in the way of supplying water as it has done in building wagon roads, it would settle the question of profitable mining on many claims which are not now of much value. An attempt was made to provide water by granting what is known as the Treadgold concession. This was a practical monopoly of certain water sources given on the understanding that the supply would be developed and water sold to the miners at fair prices. Practically nothing was done under that concession and it has been cancelled by the Dominion Government.

IV

CROSSING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

IF you are ordinarily business-like and careful in your financial transactions, you at least glance at the change when it is handed back to you, just to see that there is no mistake. I saw a man make a purchase in a Dawson store, pull a leather poke out of his pocket and hand it to the clerk. He then turned around and engaged in conversation with another man. Presently his poke was handed back to him, together with a number of articles he had purchased, and he left the store. He had paid for his purchases in gold dust, the amount had been weighed out by the clerk without any attention being paid to the operation by the purchaser, and when he departed he had no means of knowing, unless he had weighed his gold before he entered the store, whether the right amount had been taken out. I had heard before of the practice of receiving back the change without counting it and I asked the storekeeper if all his customers had as much faith in his honesty as this one appeared to have; whether they were all in the habit of handing over their dust pokes for him to take what he wanted.

"He knows well enough," said the merchant, "that I could not afford to cheat him. We trust one another in this country—more, probably, than you do in the States.

In the early days we had to, and woe to the man who betrayed a trust. There is nothing so utterly unpardonable in a mining camp as a deal that isn't square, and in the early days a man who was not square did not last long."

The use of gold dust in the ordinary transactions of trade has pretty nearly gone out of vogue now, however, not only in Dawson, but in the surrounding mining camps. Gold dust is used more on the Alaska side than in the Yukon, because the conveniences of converting it into money are greater on the Canadian side than on the American. The commercial companies and some local merchants who act as brokers, but chiefly the commercial companies and the banks, buy the gold dust, and export it, paying the 2 1-2 per cent. royalty or export duty to the Government.

Next to a clean-up, where the virgin gold is taken out in the sluice boxes, the most interesting operation in which this precious metal figures is the smelting of the dust and nuggets into bars for export. Our company was invited to witness this interesting operation in the British Bank of North America. The gold is reduced in a furnace to liquid form and turned out into a mould, making a brick about the size of those ordinarily used for paving. Such a brick weighs about 1,000 troy ounces, or approximately 83 pounds troy weight. The Klondike gold runs from $15.50 to $17 an ounce, making the gold brick weighing 1,000 ounces worth from $15,000 to $17,000, varying according to the number of ounces it contains and the fineness

of the gold. The actual value is determined by chipping off a little piece and assaying it. The brick is then stamped as to its weight and fineness, and is sent to the mint. Nearly all of the gold sent out of the Klondike region goes to the mint at Seattle. There is a Government mint at Vancouver, but as the ships of the regular lines from Skagway run to Seattle, the gold is nearly all shipped there, so that eventually the gold output of the Klondike finds its market in the United States.

Staking a claim in the Klondike is a much more exact proposition than on the Alaskan side under the American laws. In placer mining, which is about the only kind of mining carried on in the Klondike as yet, a creek claim means an area 250 feet up and down the creek and 2,000 feet in width. This seems to be a case where the thing described is broader than it is long. The mining laws have been amended at various times so as to change the area of a claim materially. Prior to April 1, 1898, and when the first claims were staked in that region, the claim ran from the base of the hill on one side of the creek to the base of the hill on the other side for a distance of 500 feet up and down the creek. This was changed April 1, 1898, to 250 feet lengthwise of the creek and running from rimrock to rimrock on either side. Two years later the form of a claim was changed again, allowing the claimant to measure 250 feet along the creek and 1,000 feet back on each side. In 1901 the present method was inaugurated, which provides for a claim as already described, 2,000 feet by 250 feet; but it was found that in laying out claims per-

pendicular to the creek difficulties were encountered from overlapping by reason of the sinuosity of the creek. It was therefore provided that when gold had been discovered on a creek the Government should survey what is called a base line; that is to say, a straight line, changing its direction at exact angles to correspond with the general direction of the creek. This provides for more accurate definition of claim boundaries by establishing a base line from which they may be measured.

A hill claim, that is one lying up above the creek claim, is only 1,000 feet in width; that is to say, it has the same frontage lengthwise of the creek as the creek claim —250 feet, but extends back in one direction only 1,000 feet.

When a prospector undertakes to stake a claim he must set two posts, one at the upper end on the creek and the other at the lower end on the creek, on which he must post the name of the claim, a description of it, including mention of natural monuments such as trees, or rocks, or anything else by which it can be identified; he must state the date of the location and give his own full name. Within ten days he must file his claim at the mining recorder's office, but before any prospector can file a claim to mining property he must take out a free miner's license, good for one year, at a cost of $7.50.

In the British Yukon no miner can stake more than one mining claim on one river, creek or gulch, although he may hold any number of claims by purchase, but he may stake claims on other creeks or gulches in the same district

or on what is called a pup. A pup is a small creek or gulch leading into a larger one.

Every claim-holder is required to do what is called development work on his claim to the value of at least $200 each year, or in lieu of the work he may pay $200 a year to the mining recorder for three years, after which he must pay $400 each year. He must also have a certificate annually that his $200 worth of work has been done or his $200 paid, or the claim will be cancelled in the gold commissioner's office.

The regulations for quartz claims and for copper locations vary somewhat from those applying to gold placer claims. For instance, a quartz claim may be 1,500 by 1,500 feet. The annual development work required is limited to $100 and after five years the claimant may purchase the land at $1 an acre. Placer claims are really only leased, the claimant having no title to the land and being granted possession only so long as he complies with the above regulations. Copper locations may be 160 acres in a square block, but only one location may be taken within an area of ten miles square, nor is the claimant to a copper location permitted to mine any other metals not mixed with copper, and in no case may he mine free-milling gold or silver on a copper permit.

These restrictions guard against one man or a few monopolising the whole of a rich mining district. The Dominion laws are also liberal to aliens in that citizenship or first steps to naturalisation are not necessary in order to take up a claim. On the Alaska side only citizens



Washing out Gold with the Rocker



or those who have declared an intention to become citizens may locate mining claims.

Very complete records are kept in the gold commissioner's office in Dawson. It is possible by these records to determine at any time the status of any claim, just as it is possible to determine by the examination of the records whether any mortgages have been recorded against a piece of land in the state of Minnesota. The contrast between the business-like methods and the clear and definite information obtainable at any time in the gold commissioner's office in Dawson with respect to any piece of mining property in Yukon territory and the miserable tangle into which titles to mining property have been brought in Alaska, in the Nome district for example, is no credit to our American statesmanship; but that will be changed. That the business of bookkeeping with regard to the mining business of the Klondike country is considerable may be inferred from the fact that during the year 1902, 10,490 free miners' certificates were issued, showing that that many people were holding claims.

The output of the Klondike region for 1904 is officially stated at $10,300,000, a smaller production than usual on account of the lack of water. The mining season was dry and the snowfall of the previous winter comparatively light. But even with a better water supply the annual crop of gold is smaller by several millions now than in 1898 and 1899. The total output of the district since the discovery in 1896 is roughly estimated at $120,000,000.



River Front at Eagle

When the senatorial party left home it was arranged that it should make the trip from Dawson down the Yukon on one of the fine boats of the Northern Commercial company. This boat, the Sarah, was expected to arrive about the 10th or 12th of July and depart within twenty-four hours on the downward trip, thus giving the committee three or four days in Dawson. The Sarah did not arrive on schedule time, and was eagerly looked for for several days. There is a telegraph line from Dawson to Eagle, 110 miles down the river, and notice by wire of the arrival of the Sarah at Eagle was hourly expected. The 12th arrived, and the 13th, and the 14th, and still no word from Sarah. It was believed, however, that this boat would certainly make her appearance within a day or two, when, on the morning of the 14th, we boarded a local boat for Eagle, the first town on the Yukon across the American border. The plan was to go down to Eagle, where, also, is located Fort Egbert, with the expectation of continuing the investigations with regard to Alaskan matters at that point for a day or two until the Sarah should arrive at Dawson and return, taking us on board on her downward trip.

The Yukon from Dawson northwestward to Eagle, flows through a succession of hills, slightly wooded. The only point of interest is a trading station occupied by both the great trading companies, called Forty-Mile. This post is at the mouth of the Forty-Mile River, on the tributaries of which is located the celebrated Forty-Mile mining district, a district which had turned out a great deal of gold



The Senator from Minnesota Ready for the Trail at Eagle

before the Klondike was discovered, and from which occurred the first stampede to the Klondike region.

Eagle, lying within five miles of the international boundary on the American side, is a town with a future. With a population of about 250 it is of interest because of the location there of the most northern customs house belonging to the United States and the most northern military post. The garrison consists of one company of regulars, quartered in comfortable log houses and barracks, and then under the command of Captain Perkins, who had a company of the Eighth Regiment. Here is found one of the best demonstrations of the agricultural possibilities of Alaska, and the garden nearest to the Pole where important results have been secured. The gardens of the post produce large quantities of potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, turnips and radishes. So far as these products are concerned, the ability to produce them successfully on the 65th degree of north latitude has been demonstrated. Other vegetables, peas, beans, etc., are also grown to some extent.

Life in an army post almost under the Arctic Circle, as can readily be imagined, has its drawbacks, and, indeed, all Alaskan military service is counted in the war department as foreign service and calls for 10 per cent. extra pay.

The mails crossing Alaska from Dawson to Nome, which is the postal route by which Fort Egbert is supplied in winter, are carried at that season of the year on dog sleds and may not exceed 400 pounds on leaving Dawson.



A Dog Team in Alaska

This means that no newspaper mail and magazines can be obtained after the river closes in October until it opens in June; no mail can be carried except first-class mail, paying letter postage. Friends outside sometimes send clippings from newspapers to their friends "on the inside" under letter postage, but such packages must not be large enough to excite the suspicion of the mail-carrier or they will probably be left behind till spring, as the regular letter mail for Nome, awaiting transportation at Dawson, often exceeds 400 pounds. The excess must always wait until the next time, even if it should be a letter from home to some weary, homesick soul; and the next time is the next month, as the mail crosses Alaska to Nome not oftener than once a month.

Eagle, however, is not without its social life. It has two churches and these societies indulge in church socials, in musicales and resort to such other devices of cultivating the social nature and filling the contribution box as are common in other communities.

The feminine population of the village affords at least one fine example of enterprise and pluck. The hotel which sheltered our party was conducted by a young lady who had been a school-teacher in the state of Washington, but has found Alaska a more profitable field for the exercise of her energy and talents. She was in Sheep Camp down on Chilcoot Pass near Dyea, with two of her brothers, in the winter of '98 and '99, when the great snowslide occurred which buried eighty-nine men who were struggling up the mountainside. Her brothers helped to shovel out the vic-

tims. A little later she crossed over the same trail, helped her brothers build a boat on Lake Linderman and floated with them down the Yukon to Dawson in the spring of '99. She was accompanied by a girl friend of the same indomitable spirit. This trip, she says, was a picinc. With all their possessions aboard and themselves comfortably housed under a tent erected on a flatboat, they had a jolly time floating with the current from the slopes of the coast range to the mouth of the Klondike. Stopping only two days in Dawson, she arrived in Eagle on the 1st of July, 1899, and while her brothers went on down the river with some freight which they were carrying for other people, she opened a restaurant in a tent and made it pay. She soon had a chance to go into the hotel business, has been appointed postmistress, and finds her employment so profitable, and is so well content in her northern home, that the schoolroom in the States which she abandoned for Alaska has no attractions for her now.

Cheery, energetic and independent, it never occurs to her that her lot is a hard one in any particular. She is prosperous and useful, respected and happy, which goes to show that these things do not depend wholly on environment. She has been "outside" only once since she came to Alaska, and then in obedience to filial duty. Her parents live on a little farm near Seattle which her Alaska savings bought for them. Her piano and her small but well-selected library suggest what is confirmed by a few minutes' conversation, that the little postmistress of Eagle is a woman of culture and a womanly woman, with all



her commercial ambitions and abilities. And so you find that here in the heart of the northern snowfields the women of Alaska rise superior to their seemingly overwhelming surroundings, and though imprisoned beyond the possibility of escape from October to June they bear their share of the burden of isolation with most admirable courage and cheerfulness.

Among our fellow passengers on the boat from Dawson to Eagle was Captain D. H. Jarvis, United States inspector of customs, who was on an official tour. Mr. Jarvis is Alaska's hero. When the history of that country is written, no page, from the beginning until now, will glow with a brighter example of bravery, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty than that which recites the story of the relief expedition to Point Barrow in the winter of 1897 and '98. Only brief reference can be made to it here, and if the details were obtainable only from the lips of Mr. Jarvis, the narrative would be meagre enough in that embellishment which the recital of thrilling personal adventure contributes; for Mr. Jarvis is of the kind of whom heroes are usually made. Modest, quiet, never directing attention to himself and reluctant to converse on the subject of his own exploits, it would be difficult, indeed, to gain from him in conversation any adequate conception of the brave work which he did.

In the fall of '97 eight whaling ships were caught in the ice off the northern shore of Alaska in the Arctic Ocean. Some of them were badly broken up by the ice, but the men managed to reach Point Barrow, the



Lt. Bertholf Dr. Call Captain Jarvis

most northern settlement under the American flag. They were without supplies sufficient to carry them through the winter, and it was feared that they would all perish of cold and hunger. News of their desperate plight reached the States about the 1st of December. The Government at Washington saw the necessity of sending relief, but how to get it to them was the apparently unsolvable problem, and who should lead the expedition was a no less difficult question. Captain Jarvis, then a lieutenant of the United States revenue-cutter service, was in the States on leave and at the bedside of his sick wife in Massachusetts. Her condition was serious. The Government asked him if he would go. He looked at his sick wife and said no. The chances were so desperate that the relief expedition itself could not reach Point Barrow that the Government did not like to order any one to make the attempt, but began to look for volunteers. Seeing the attitude of the Government, and impressed with the belief that it was his duty, as, perhaps, the one best qualified by experience and knowledge of the country to lead this expedition, Mr. Jarvis tendered his services, bade goodbye to his family and raced with all speed across the continent to Seattle, where the revenue cutter Bear had been ordered by telegraph to be ready and provisioned for the expedition.

Captain Jarvis had already submitted to the Government a plan by which the relief needed could reach the imprisoned sailors. He proposed to go as far north in the Bear as it was possible, then take to the ice with

dogs and go to the nearest reindeer stations on the Seward Peninsula. Domestic reindeer had been imported from Siberia several years before and several reindeer stations or ranches had already been established. From these stations he planned to take reindeer across the country to Point Barrow.

The Bear passed through the Aleutian chain at Dutch Harbour, turned northeast and sought the most northerly limit of the open water on the west coast of Alaska. This point was reached at the village of Tununak, near Cape Vancouver, on Nelson Island, where Captain Jarvis disembarked at an Indian village, accompanied by Dr. S. J. Call and Lieutenant E. P. Bertholf. They proceeded north by the aid of Indians with dog teams to St. Michael and thence to the reindeer station on Golofnin Bay. Here and at other reindeer stations in that part of Alaska a herd of 400 reindeer under the care of W. T. Lopp, superintendent of the Teller reindeer station, was collected and sent forward 500 miles further to Point Barrow.

The imprisoned whalers had practically given up, and, while not yet out of food, were doing nothing to preserve their own health. Mr. Jarvis, supported by his three assistants, asserted the authority of the Government and took charge of all the supplies on hand, measured out the rations, provided fresh reindeer meat, compelled the men to take daily exercise, and, in short, brought them through to the breaking up of the ice in July, undoubtedly saving the lives of hundreds who were fast yielding to despair and disease.



The story of this remarkable expedition into the very heart of the arctic region in the dead of winter, has been told by Mr. Jarvis in an official report with a degree of modesty which is eloquent of the courage and resolution and tact required not only to face the terrors of the journey across the snowfields of the north, but to assert and maintain complete mastery over the crazed and mutinous and desperate men who constituted the crews of the imprisoned whalers. Indeed, it was not facing blizzards on the bleak shores of the Arctic Ocean, the long stretches of weary tramping over the ice and snow, with not a human habitation for hundreds of miles, not even an Indian igloo in which to find shelter—it was not the toil and suffering of that weary struggle for 1,800 miles in midwinter that required nerve and courage so much as the assertion and maintenance of absolute authority in the beleaguered camp after the relief expedition reached there. Yet the small, spare, low-voiced, slow-speaking, modest but resolute man, to whom the people of Alaska all take off their hats when they address Captain D. H. Jarvis, is the man whom the Government selected for that desperate errand, and made no mistake in the choice.

Relief came on the 26th of July when the ice pack in the Arctic Ocean broke up as far north as Point Barrow. It was then that Captain Jarvis learned that there had been a war with Spain; that it was all over, and that he had no chance to get in. This is the only thing in connection with the expedition about which he has ever been known to express any regret. The splendid heroism displayed by

Captain Jarvis, as the leader of the Point Barrow expedition, was tardily recognised by Congress last year, when he was awarded a gold medal.

There was another Alaska hero on board the Bailey going down from Dawson to Eagle. There is no man in Daw-



Ben Downing

son who has more friends and who is really regarded with more good will by the people of that city than Ben Downing, the veteran mail-carrier of the Yukon. Ben Downing was carrying the royal mail from Dawson to Eagle. His engagement by the Dominion Government in this service is a commentary on the ingratitude of the Republic, and indicates a higher appreciation of faithful public

service on the part of our neighbours of the British Empire. Four or five years ago, Downing, who was once a Maine Yankee, left off "broncho-busting" and "cow-punching" in Arizona and joined the stampede to the north. He did not strike anything very rich at the beginning, and soon found himself engaged as Government mail-carrier on the long route between Dawson and Nome. It was his business to make the run from Dawson down the Yukon to the Tanana, a distance of nearly 900 miles. The traversing of this long and weary route alone in the dead of an Arctic winter was the agreeable task assigned to Mr. Downing, but he enjoyed it. He had his dogs and his sled, and he could "mush"* 40 miles a day or more after his fleet-footed and tireless "huskies" and "malamutes." The route was laid with roadhouses at the end of each day's journey, in which Downing and his dogs housed themselves at night. It was on one of these long runs, when nearing Dawson on his eastward trip, that he ran into a hole in the ice in the Yukon River. The side bars of a dog sled terminate usually in two curved handles, much like the handles of a plow, to which the driver may hold as he runs behind his team. The dogs saw the danger in time to sheer off, but the sled toppled partly into the water, into which Downing fell. His dogs, seeing him in distress, were inclined to turn and come to him, but being

* In Alaska and the Klondike to "mush" is to walk, or to run slowly. The miner who tramps over the country prospecting "mushes"; the mail-carrier who walks "mushes." Whether the word has an Indian origin I do not know, but such origin is not necessary to explain its use when every step on the soft, wet, spongy mat of moss and roots and grass that covers the ground over such a large portion of the country suggests the word.

vigorously urged on they pulled the sled and their master so that by their help he was able to raise himself out of the water, from which he emerged without cap or mittens, drenched from head to foot. He was several miles from a roadhouse where he could find warmth and shelter, and a less resolute man would have frozen stiff in a few minutes. He urged his dogs with all his might and ran at the top of his speed, knowing that his life depended upon his utmost exertions. It was one of those beautiful clear Arctic nights when the mercury crawls down in the bulb and lies there, a little solid bullet. The temperature was probably about 60 degrees below. His clothes froze so stiff as to impede his running, but still he struggled on. Finally reaching the roadhouse, he dashed within, and called for help. His clothing was cut from him as rapidly as possible. His face and nose and ears were badly frozen, and his feet were almost solid. In a short time he was dressed in dry and warm clothing and, with his blistered and swollen feet prepared as best he could for the journey, he refused the urgent appeal of the keeper of the roadhouse to remain, but insisted on pressing on to Dawson, that he might deliver the mail on time. The mail was delivered on time, but this last stage of his journey, it is needless to say, was accomplished only with intense suffering and by the exercise of a powerful will. They say in Dawson that, as he hobbled into the post-office there, his footsteps were marked with blood.

His mail delivered, he was taken at once to a hospital and the doctors decided that his feet were so badly frozen

it would be necessary to amputate them. Downing heard this conclusion announced and quietly asked that some one hand him his revolver. They hesitated lest he might be contemplating suicide, but when he assured them that he had no such intention, they gave it to him. He put it under his pillow, and lay down. "Now," said he, "go ahead and fix up them feet the best you can, but let me tell you that if I wake up and find you fellows have cut them off I am going to shoot the man that did it. Them feet and me are goin' together; if I live I have use for them; if I can't have them I don't want to live. Now, go ahead." The result was that the ends of several of his toes were trimmed off and the old mail-carrier is not quite as agile as he used to be, but he walks comfortably on two feet, a really splendid fellow and a living monument to grit and endurance, expended in carrying out what he believed to be his duty as a public servant. What a pity there are not more like him! The ingratitude of republics came in when Downing, owing to the fact that he could not get the mail carried as promptly while he was laid up in the hospital as it was carried before, lost his contract with the United States postal authorities; the higher appreciation of the Dominion Government rewarded him with a contract to carry the royal mail between Eagle and Dawson.

Downing is an authority on dogs. He has a corral near Dawson where he has a hundred or more of these faithful animals, which he uses in his mail-carrying business in winter. There are two kinds of dogs common in Alaska—the "huskies" and their cross-breeds from the Mackenzie

River country—those stocky, grey fellows, with their short, erect ears and close, thick coat, intelligent and handsome—and the "malamute," an Alaska Indian dog crossed with the wolf and resembling the wolf a good deal in shape and



Miner and Dogs Rigged for Packing

size, a shaggy brownish-grey fellow, friendly and tractable and a perfect slave. These animals are grossly abused by the Indians; they haul their sledges all day to be rewarded at night with a piece of frozen dog-salmon and a chance to curl up in the snow to sleep. With such treatment the dog gets the reputation of not being an affectionate creature. Downing's dogs have warm, comfortable shelter whenever they reach a roadhouse; when he is compelled to camp by



the roadside, as sometimes happens, they share his tent, curl up around him and protect him with the warmth of their own bodies and whenever he enters the corral they are wild in their demonstrations of delight. " Don't tell me," said Downing, " that these fellows are not affectionate. I wish some good woman would take a notion some day to like me half as much as they do." If she does she will have to tell him; Ben would not dare to ask her.

Although of a kindly disposition toward humankind these brutes are often very quarrelsome among themselves and it is the general rule that when a fight begins there is no sympathy for the under dog among the rest of the pack. On the contrary, the poor fellow who is getting the worst of it is likely to be beset by all the rest and literally torn to pieces.

Don't think I overestimate the dog. He is one of the institutions in Alaska. He, as a judge on the bench recently said in an Alaska case, " is one of the most important factors in the development of his country." What the ox was to the pioneer of the Wabash valley, what the horse is to the ranchman of the plains, what the camel is to the denizen of the desert, the dog has been to the miner and prospector of Alaska, and will be till the United States Government manifests as much interest in Alaska as Canada does in the Yukon territory and builds roads over which freight may be hauled in wagons. Under the present conditions it's a poor dog that isn't worth $25 and one team of five was sold in Dawson for $2,500.

Eagle, I have said, is a town with a future. There are

two towns in Alaska, 400 miles apart, which are longing for the day when a railroad will connect them; one is Valdez on the south, at the head of Prince William Sound, and the other is Eagle on the Yukon. In 1899 the Government undertook to build a road from Valdez to Eagle and did expend considerable money bridging streams and laying out a trail through the forests and over the mountains, and on this trail the mail is carried between Valdez and Eagle. A Government telegraph line follows this trail from Valdez to Eagle and a railroad is projected over this route. Some day it will be built. How soon no one can tell. Valdez is living in hope of this road. A wagon road part of the way would greatly benefit Valdez; a wagon road all of the way would be of immense value to Eagle, but of more immediate importance to Eagle would be a system of roads extending south and west twenty-five to fifty miles, into the Forty-Mile mining district. This district is mainly on the American side and naturally tributary to Eagle, an American town, but owing to the fact that the Yukon Government has already constructed a road from Dawson to the boundary line near the Forty-Mile district, the trade goes largely to Dawson, because supplies can be transported so much cheaper over the Dawson road than they can be carried over the miserable trails reaching back from Eagle.

The senatorial party arrived at Eagle on Wednesday, the 15th. Here, as at Dawson, the stretches of the river below were scanned eagerly with field-glasses every day for a glimpse of the Sarah. Four days passed and yet no sign of the missing boat. It happened, however, that the

United States army transport, Jefferson C. Davis, in charge of Lieutenant Kalde, was lying at Eagle waiting orders to proceed to Dawson to convey General Funston down the river on his tour of inspection of the Alaskan military posts. Inasmuch as General Funston would not need the transport until the first of August, arrangements were made to have it convey our company to Rampart, 450 miles further down the river, where Judge Wickersham of the central division was holding court, where there would be opportunity to see men from all parts of central Alaska and where it was hoped some boat might be found in which to continue the journey.

We left Eagle Saturday at noon. The river here maintains about the same characteristics heretofore noted. It grows wider and carries a larger volume of water, but is confined within reasonable limits for the next 100 miles. At 11 o'clock at night we sighted the town of Circle, once a place of considerable importance, and although it was nearly midnight when we arrived, the leading men of the place presented themselves to offer any courtesies which the senatorial party might be pleased to accept. Among the objects of interest exhibited here was a field of oats nearly arrived at the heading-out stage, not a very heavy growth, but still of good colour and not unpromising. Experience is, however, that this crop cannot be successfully ripened in that country and is valuable only as forage. The midnight was so light that the visit to Circle was made without any inconvenience on account of the time of day.

A short distance below Circle City the river begins to



Old Hudson Bay Trading Post, Fort Yukon



spread out and at the widest point it is probably twenty miles in width. Navigation through these Yukon flats is attended with great difficulty. The stream is necessarily shallow, being spread over so wide an area, and it keeps the navigators guessing to follow the channel. The channel shifts continually, and while it may be in one place at one time, a month later or next year it may be miles away. There are no buoys or beacons and the pilots, who are often Indians, read the water and tell by its appearance where to go, although the boiling, muddy flood looks about the same everywhere to inexperienced eyes.

The next morning after leaving Circle we were called early that we might all see a large, handsome river steamer lying on a sandbar at one side of the channel. On her pilot house we read the name Sarah. We learned later that she had been on the sandbar for three days already and her situation indicated that it would probably be as many more before she could escape, and it was.

About 11 o'clock of Sunday, July 19, we crossed the Arctic Circle and the whole party lined up on the upper deck for a photograph taken within the Frigid Zone. Everybody tried hard to imagine what it meant to cross the Arctic Circle and stand within the realm supposed to be given up to perpetual ice and snow, but it was not an easy thing to do. There were no shivers running down our backs, no frost in the air, no rubbing of noses and ears, but rather the balmy air of an early October day in Minnesota. It was at noon of such a day when we touched at Fort Yukon, an abandoned military post, about six miles north

of the Arctic Circle, and the most northerly point on the Yukon River. At one time it was important in the fur trade, and the old buildings of the trading post are still standing, but the fur business has disappeared and has left only a small Indian village. The decline of the fur trade under the cruel game laws of Alaska, which rob the Indian of a market for his furs at the season when they are most marketable, has left these people without any means of support adequate to their necessities; the Government of the United States makes no appropriations for the care of the Indians of Alaska and their condition is deplorable. Religious exercises were in progress in the log cabin near the landing, a lay reader, a full-blooded Athabaskan, conducting the service. Indian oratory, as exemplified by William Loola, is anything but dramatic and vociferous. In a quiet and devout manner he read the lessons of the day and led his fellow parishioners through the Episcopal service, winding up with a hymn, and all, of course, in the Indian language. The missionary, Mr. Wooden, was not at home; he was on the Sarah, bound for Dawson, for which he had started three days before, but towards which he had made but little progress. His wife and children, two small boys, with the trader's family, were the only white people in this settlement.

The remainder of the day was spent on the monotonous waste of the Yukon flats. The next morning, Monday, July 20, we arrived at the village of Rampart, 620 miles from Dawson.

V

THROUGH THE HEART OF ALASKA

ADAPTATION to his surroundings is one of the human animal's strong points. He can make himself at home, as he phrases it, almost anywhere and under almost any conditions. I found an illustration of this peculiar and serviceable faculty in the heart of Alaska. It was at Rampart, so I am told, that a philosopher, who wished to preserve the natural and accustomed order of things, with as little dislocation as possible, provided himself with a daily paper for each of his long winter evenings. He was 2,000 miles from any daily newspaper office and the winter mails carried no newspapers, yet he had his daily paper and kept posted in a way on all the important news of the world. The way he managed that was simple enough, as you will admit. He knew that there was no paper mail delivered at Rampart from October 15 to the following Fourth of July, so he subscribed in the fall for a daily paper published in the States and had it sent in by freight the next spring. When the papers arrived he stacked them up in regular order, the one of earliest date on top and when he sat down with his pipe by his cabin fire in the evening he took up the first paper on the pile and read up the news of the day. Of course, he knew that what he read was nearly a year old to the people in

the States, but what was that to him? His daily paper was just as new to him then as it ever had been to the folks at home.

This story, whether strictly true or not, throws some light upon what life in the heart of Alaska means, and Rampart comes pretty near being in the heart of Alaska. It is about half-way down the Yukon from Dawson to Bering Sea. Imagine a turgid stream half a mile wide, flowing between sloping hillsides, rather sparsely wooded with an inferior grade of spruce and birch, a thick mat of tangled vines and moss covering the ground with a soft, wet, spongy carpet eight or ten inches thick, shielding the frozen earth from the rays of the sun, and on the high left bank of this stream locate a somewhat irregular line of one- and two-story log houses fronting the river for over half a mile, with a few scattered cabins on the hillside above; fill these river-front houses with merchandise, dry and wet, throw in a small frame telegraph station of a local line, a little white building for the accommodation of the federal court, tack up a lawyer's sign or two and hang out a single doctor's sign, write the initials of the Northern Commercial and the North American Transportation and Trading companies on the biggest buildings in town, take no special pains to preserve a regular street line, and make the wooden sidewalk conform to the sinuosities of the building fronts, sprinkle the sidewalk and the sloping river bank liberally with sleeping dogs, fill up the town with 300 or 400 people from everywhere, living in peace and harmony with each other, and

you have Rampart, which was the hospitable tarrying place of the senatorial committee from July 20 to July 23.

It was the same old story of nothing-too-good for the senatorial party and "whatever we have is yours." Men vacated their beds and changed their boarding places and abandoned their business that they might contribute to the comfort and pleasure of the senatorial visitors and their party.

You may be at a loss to account for this town, and for the considerable stocks of merchandise which fill the stores of the big trading and transportation companies, but down on the river bank you may see several thousand feet of iron piping waiting till the ground freezes up to be taken back into the interior together with a lot of other mining machinery and you will find that there are several more or less important mining districts supplied from this point, among them, some comparatively rich diggings on Minook Creek.

Rampart is pretty lively when we arrive. Court is about to sit, and lawyers and litigants, witnesses and prisoners are here in such numbers that beds in severalty, so to speak, are hard to get. They come for hundreds of miles and spend weeks in getting here, and we know of some who would be glad to be here but cannot come because the sandbars of the Yukon hold fast the boats in which they must ride. They are also waiting for the Sarah.

If you ask any Alaskan what the people of that district want most at the hands of Congress you will learn that the first thing the Government at Washington is expected

to do for them is to give them representation in Congress—a delegate to look after their interests just as our congressmen in the States are supposed to look after ours. They want other things, too—good roads, revision of the mining



Bargain Day at Rampart

laws and many are particularly anxious for territorial government. On this latter point the Alaskans are not unanimous, but there is no dissent from the proposition that Alaska should have a delegate in Congress. There is some question, however, as to how he should be chosen—whether elected or appointed. But the desire for a delegate is universal, is natural and reasonable, and Congress will no doubt provide for such representative in some way at an early date.



Rampart is one of the places where Judge James Wickersham, of the central Alaska judicial division, holds court. His district is 500 miles wide and 900 miles long. It extends from the North Pacific Ocean to the Arctic Ocean and from the international boundary on the east to the mouth of the Koyukuk. There isn't a mile of railroad in it and no wagon road worthy of the name. The means of transportation are steamers along the south coast and on the Yukon River, which runs through the middle of the district. When court is held at Eagle or Rampart for the accommodation of the people of the central and northern parts of the district, justice costs time and money. One man, Judge McKenzie, United States commissioner at Cold Foot on the upper Koyukuk, travelled 900 miles and 27 days to get to Rampart to attend court.

In Alaska the administration of the laws is committed to three federal judges and the commissioners whom the judges appoint. The federal court issues all licenses, franchises and charters and collects all occupation taxes. The commissioners correspond to the justices of the peace in the States with the added functions of coroner, recorder and probate judge. Every settlement or village or mining district of importance where there are 200 or more men has a commissioner, who is practically the whole thing so far as the enforcement of law is concerned. These commissioners are usually selected with great care and as a rule are a superior grade of men. It is important that they should be so selected, as appeal from them to the federal

judge nearly always involves great expense for transportation of principals and witnesses to the established places of holding court.

Rampart was full of litigants and attorneys and witnesses from Eagle and Circle City, from the upper Koyu-



Dog Power at Rampart

kuk and the Tanana and other places in the interior. Some criminal business was pending, a grand jury was empanelled and the regular machinery of justice was set going the first day of the term. The presence of men of prominence from various places in the central and northern parts of the central judicial division afforded peculiar advantages for gaining information about the resources of

the country, the condition of the people, the efficiency of the administrative machinery and the prevailing sentiment as to what action on the part of Congress is desired by the people and would best promote the interests of the district.

A couple of young men on board a steamship sailing between Seattle and Skagway developed the idea that inasmuch as they were going far from home and into a country where every man is supposed to look out for himself, circumstances might arise where it would be a good thing to have friends, and that probably the best way to provide for such emergencies was to organise a fraternal and mutual benefit society. That was four years ago, or more. The result of this thought is a secret society known as the Arctic Brotherhood, of which there are camps in all the settlements and towns of any consequence in Alaska. There was a camp of the Arctic Brotherhood at Rampart. This fraternity has a building of its own there, containing a good-sized hall in which it holds its regular meetings and which serves as a public hall for the town and a sort of social centre. A feature of the hospitality extended to the senatorial party was a " smoker," the night before we left, at the A. B. hall. This social session was presided over by Judge Claypool, United States commissioner at Circle, who was in Rampart attending court. Claypool belongs to the prominent Indiana family of that name, and sustains the reputation of the family for intellectual cleverness and capacity. The impromptu programme developed the existence of considerable talent for entertaining on the part of the citizens of Rampart. At this evening entertain-



While Crossing the Arctic Circle

ment it occurred to some member of the Arctic Brotherhood that it would be a capital idea to invite the members of the senatorial party to become honorary members of the fraternity. The senators expressed their appreciation of the compliment, and a meeting for the purposes of initiating by special dispensation was called for 11 o'clock the next day.

Initiation into the Arctic Brotherhood, it can be stated without revealing any of the secrets or violating the solemn oath, is attended at times with experiences which the initiates are not likely soon to forget. While it was proposed to have a special dispensation for the senatorial party, applying the forms of regular initiation to some other candidates, one member of our party expressed an unwillingness to be made the object of special favours in the way of initiation and a preference for induction into the mysteries of the order in the regular way. The members of the camp were quite ready to take him at his word, and it is sufficient to say that the initiation was thorough and complete, to the great edification and entertainment of his fellow travellers. The victim was Will H. Brill, a newspaper man who had joined our company after we entered Alaska, and who has since taken several more degrees as a war correspondent with the Japanese army.

The Arctic Brotherhood is really an excellent organisation, serving purposes substantially similar to those promoted by such organisations as the Knights of Pythias and the Odd Fellows. There is a camp at Seattle composed of Alaska men, and it was this body which provided a special



Drying Salmon on the Yukon



entertainment for President Roosevelt when he was in that city two years ago, at which he took occasion to make the speech with regard to Alaska which attracted so much attention at the time. At this meeting of the Rampart camp notice was taken of President Roosevelt's extraordinary interest in Alaska and by action of the camp the President was invited to become and was duly elected as an honorary member of the brotherhood, and the senators were commissioned to convey to him formal notice of his election. The emblem of this society, worn by members, is a small bronze button in the form of a miner's pan with the letters A. B. at the top, and on the lower edge three small gold nuggets.

As it happened that all the senators were lawyers, it was also suggested that they ought to be members of the Alaska bar. They were accordingly invited to enrol themselves among the legal fraternity of the district and having been brought before Judge Wickersham and having exhibited sufficient legal attainments and the proper qualifications in all other respects, good moral character, etc., were duly admitted. Down at Sitka there is an institution of no little value historically and scientifically, known as the Sheldon Jackson museum. It is provided by law that all fees for admission to the bar shall be applied to the maintenance of that institution, so that the Sitka museum, to which the senators paid a visit a month later, was enriched to the extent of $40 by this action, which also increased the membership of the bar of Alaska by adding four distinguished names from the roll of the United States Senate.



Indian "Cache" at Rampart

Rampart was an Indian village before it became an important station in the commercial system of the transportation and trading companies, and just across the mouth of the Little Minook is the Indian village of which William Pitgu is chief. Here is a collection of Indian cabins and on the racks in front are strung the red salmon which the Indians are drying and smoking for their winter supply. As previously stated, these Alaskan Indians appreciate the comforts of warm log houses in winter, but they almost invariably betake themselves to tents and wickiups in summer, or during the salmon season. In the house of William Pitgu, to which I was invited by the hospitable chief, and which in point of cleanliness and furnishings was very much the best Indian habitation seen in Alaska outside of Metlakahtla; I found his son and his son's wife sewing canvas and making a tent and the young man displayed quite as much skill in running a sewing machine as he had in the construction of the long-boat which carried me across the Minook to his father's village.

They say that in Alaska the worm never turns and then they rather tardily explain this departure from nature's law by the further statement that there are no worms. It is also capable of demonstration that the cellars in Alaska are never damp, but the course of reasoning is not quite the same. The fact is the Alaska cellar is built about five feet above ground. They call it a "cache," and pronounce it cash. It is to all appearances a little log cabin set up on poles, the entrance to which is by means of a ladder made



Horns of Primeval Ox

out of a notched log, and here, high above the reach of the dogs and other prowling animals, are stored the family supplies.

The white man, however, has not adhered strictly to the Indian custom, for the leading refreshment place of the village has a refrigerator for the preservation of fresh meats and other articles which are improved by a low temperature. Here, as everywhere else in Alaska, the frost never leaves the ground to a depth of more than two or three feet, and all that is necessary to provide an icebox is to dig to the depth of three or four feet where perishable food supplies may be kept in constant cold storage. A box is let down into the excavation where, surrounded by the perpetual ice, the temperature of a first-class refrigerator plant is constantly maintained. The use of such devices in hotels and domestic establishments furnishes an obvious answer to the query as to the desirability of being the ice-man in Alaska.

In numerous places in Alaska the enormous ivory tusks of the mastodon were met with. These remnants of the animal life of a past age are supposed to prove that at some time or other the earth has slipped upon its axis, changed the direction of its diurnal revolution and that what is now the Frigid Zone was once within the Torrid belt. Of late that theory has been combated by those who contend that the mastodon was not necessarily the denizen of a warm country and that the climate of the north has not necessarily changed. However that may be, all relics of prehistoric days are suggestive to the imagination and



Lodge of Arctic Brotherhood, Rampart

no little interest was excited by the discovery on the roof of one of the Rampart cabins of a pair of enormous horns joined together by a portion of the skull of the animal to which they once belonged. These horns were found by some miners digging in the gravel of Little Minook creek not far from Rampart. They were embedded at a depth of twenty-two feet below the surface and were in a remarkable state of preservation. They measured three feet and ten inches at the widest spread and fifteen and a half inches in circumference. The tips curved inward something after the manner of buffalo horns, but the pair were much larger than the horns of the American bison. Colonel Timothy E. Wilcox, deputy surgeon general of the United States army, who first joined our party at Juneau, and subsequently fell in with us again at Eagle, and who was on a tour of inspection of the hospital service and sanitary condition of the Alaska military posts, obtained from the owner of these horns permission to forward them to the Smithsonian Institution, where they may now be seen. This was the most perfect pair of horns of this kind ever found in Alaska, so that this contribution to the Smithsonian collection is no doubt a valuable one.

I believe the time will come when Alaska will produce its own dairy products, but the beginnings are certainly very small. One of them is at Rampart, where a daughter of the Scandinavian peninsula was found one day in a high state of excitement because one of her two red cows, the only two of the species for hundreds of miles in any direction, seemed about to choke to death on a potato.



Indian Graves at Anvik

Happily she did not, but think what that would have meant to the dairymaid with milk at $1 a quart.

Rampart is the present terminus of the telegraph line which runs southward to the Tanana River, along the Tanana to the Yukon, down the Yukon to St. Michael. Of course a matter of great interest to us was the discovery of some way to continue our journey down the river. By means of this telegraph line we were able to arrange for the use of the army transport stationed at Fort Gibbon to carry us down to Nulato, where the Healy, a boat belonging to the North American Transportation and Trading company had orders to await our arrival. And so on the 23d of July we left our hospitable friends at Rampart on the transport Van Vliet, with a parting salute from the members of the Arctic Brotherhood, who lined up on shore and, as our boat swung out into the stream, gave with such striking fidelity of imitation the "malamute" yell that the "malamute" dogs themselves presently joined in the lugubrious wail. We were afloat again on the Yukon, with a reasonable assurance this time that our progress to the sea would not meet with serious interruption.

Shortly after midnight we arrived at the mouth of the Tanana River, seventy-five miles below Rampart, where to one end of the settlement occupied by one trading company is given the name of Weare, while to the other, occupied by the other commercial company, is given the name of Tanana; and between them lies a military post known as Fort Gibbon. Here was stationed a company of the Eighth Regiment, under Captain Gerhardt. A halt

was made long enough to afford Colonel Wilcox an opportunity to make his official inspection, long enough to inspect the buildings at the post and the garden of the commercial agent, and to enjoy a lunch set out by Mr. Windes, agent of the North American Trading and Transportation company, which would have done credit to any club or hotel in Minneapolis.

At Fort Gibbon stands a tall iron tower equipped with wireless telegraphic apparatus as a part of a system connecting the line from Valdez to Eagle, from the point where it crosses the Tanana River, with the line down the river to St. Michael, from which point the wireless system is employed again to convey the messages across Norton Sound to Nome. A cable was laid across that sound a year or two ago, but the ice ground it into small pieces in the spring, showing that a cable is impracticable there.

It was 10 o'clock the next night, July 24, when we overhauled the Healy, Captain Holscher, at the Indian village of Nulato. The lower Yukon possesses less of interest, scenically, than the upper stretches of that great river, and yet the roll of its mighty flood onward towards the sea carries the traveller through many miles of interesting and picturesque country. The general characteristics of the landscape are lower mountain and hill elevations, smaller timber, with occasional ramparts of solid rock showing the effects of volcanic action and great disturbance of the earth's surface.

Late Saturday afternoon, July 24, we reached the village of Anvik, an Indian settlement at the mouth of the

Anvik River. We had been told before going to Alaska that the trip down the Yukon could not be made comfortably without shields from the mosquitoes. No occasion to use them, however, had offered until this day, and none had been provided. While some annoyance from mosquitoes was experienced on deck during the day, we were quite unprepared for the attack made upon us as the gangplank touched the shore at this Indian settlement.



A "Prominent Citizen" of Anvik

A picturesque Indian graveyard had attracted attention as we swung around to the landing in the mouth of the Anvik River, and thither several members of the party had hastened. The graves were on a hillside covered with rank grass and vines and shrubbery, out of which rose clouds of mosquitoes and small black gnats, almost blinding the eyes and making a stay of only a few minutes a most painful experience. A few pictures were obtained, but not

without the shedding of blood, and great haste was made back to the shelter of the wire screens on the boat. The graveyard was, however, one of the most interesting seen in Alaska. It was remarkable for the number and variety of articles with which the graves were decorated. Nearly all were covered with small wooden structures closely resembling an ordinary chicken coop, on the top of which were painted rude but significant designs of animals and birds and fish, while the articles collected on these graves included guns, snowshoes, moccasins, masks, etc. A favourite grave decoration was a big tin pan mounted bottom side up on a tall pole. While we marvel—and let me say that nobody stopped in that graveyard long enough to do any marvelling just then—that was all reserved till after we were safe behind the Healy's mosquito bars—while we marvel at the superstition which prompts the collection of these numerous articles on the graves of the dead we are reminded of the reply of the Chinaman to the question why he put rice on the grave of his friend—whether he thought he would come back to eat it—when he said: "Yeppy; all samee Melican man come back smellee posey." The propriety of it all depends upon the viewpoint. Anvik is the seat of an Episcopal mission conducted by Rev. Mr. Chapman, who has spent nine years here among these Indians, many of whom become very devout and reasonably consistent converts to Christianity.

It was 10 o'clock in the evening and cloudy, but not yet dark, when the Healy stuck her nose against the soft, muddy bank at Holy Cross, the largest and most success-

ful of the Indian missions on the river. This institution is under the supervision of the Jesuits, of whom Father George de la Motte of Spokane is superior, assisted by members of the Sisterhood of St. Anne. Father Leopold Van Gorp is procurator in charge and associated with him is Father John Luchesi. Several brothers of the same order assist in the teaching and in the manual labour of the institution, which is considerable, as there are under cultivation here twenty-five or thirty acres, producing fine crops of potatoes, beans, peas, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, turnips and other vegetables. This is the best demonstration of Alaska's agricultural possibilities on the Yukon. There are about 150 Indians attached to the mission and while the mission buildings were substantial log structures, the grounds around them well kept and the situation picturesque, the conditions that prevailed in the little Indian village that lay almost in front of the mission, along the river bank, were in striking and pitiful contrast. Such squalor, such filth, such wretchedness suggested two reflections with regard to this mission—one, viewing the matter from the standpoint of the village, of wonder that the influence of the mission had not produced a better state of things among the Indians, and the other of wonder, viewing the matter from the standpoint of the mission school, to which we were introduced, that so much had been accomplished by the fathers and the sisters out of the material which the village furnished.

The visit of the senatorial committee had been expected for more than a week and so eager were the children to see

the senators that for several days they had kept watch by relays of the upper river from a high bluff above the settlement. When we arrived the children of the school were all in bed. They would be terribly disappointed if



An Afternoon Tea at Anvik

they did not see the visitors. Would we wait till they could be wakened and dressed and assembled in their schoolroom? Of course we would. From the priest's house we were presently conducted across the mission grounds to the Sisters' dormitory and school, another long, log building banked with flowers in great variety and abundance and set on a well-kept lawn. The schoolroom had been prepared for the occasion, draped tastefully with red and

white bunting and decorated with sentiments of welcome in letters of white and gilt. Here were assembled about twenty-five girls dressed in a neat school uniform and ranging in age from 6 to 16 years, and on the other side of the room as many boys comfortably clothed, and all taken together, a very presentable and intelligent-looking lot of children. The real surprise came, however, when they began to carry out the programme. There was a welcome song: "Home, Sweet Home," and "America," in which the peculiar and somewhat metallic, but not unpleasant, voices of the children carried the four parts to an accompaniment on a small organ. There was a short address of welcome read by one of the larger boys and a response by Senator Dillingham. Then there were recitations by the smaller children that would have done credit to pupils of the same age in the Minneapolis schools. The grave and solemn dignity, the sober, serious earnestness which found expression in the demeanour and on the faces of these little Innuits and Tinnehs would have been amusing if it had not really commanded our respect. One might almost wonder if these children could laugh and shout and play and have fun as other children do, but another visitor who came at a more opportune time describes some of the pranks she witnessed which go to show that while the Indian child of Alaska, like the Indian of the States, is generally owl-like in his solemnity as long as white strangers are by, he is not at all lacking in the spirit of fun or the capacity to express it.

This school is conducted by Sister Mary Stephen, whose

strength of character is proclaimed in her countenance, and Sister Mary Winifred, a woman of striking beauty and gentleness of manner, who, when asked how long she had been here among the Indians and how long she expects to stay, replies that she came nine years ago and that she



Holy Cross Mission Chapel

bought no return ticket. Sister Mary Stephen is asked to furnish a photograph of the school, but she has none and so the children are grouped outside the school building, and those of us who have cameras take pictures of them which turn out fairly well, although it is now 11 o'clock at night.

The mosquitoes here are nearly as ferocious as they were at Anvik and we are soon driven back again on board our boat in sheer defeat. There is no adequate oppor-

tunity afforded here to learn much of the practical and permanent effects of the mental and religious training of these children, for they cannot always be kept in the school. But enough is gathered there and elsewhere to show that while the boys in most cases reap permanent benefits and live on a higher level than their parents did, some of them earning good wages as pilots on the river, and others securing other kinds of profitable employment, the problem of the girls is much more difficult as there is almost no future for them except in the village life of their own people, or the worse fate which the presence of white adventurers so often brings. The condition of the Alaska Indian and the obligation of our Government to him are interesting and pressing questions which must receive some consideration further on.

The first sign of the Russian occupation found on the Yukon came into view for a few minutes Sunday afternoon, July 26. It was the little Greek church at Andraefski. There is an old Russian mission at Ikogmute, a little farther up, but we pass it in the night without stopping. The little church at Andraefski with its pale blue and yellow towers and domes and crosses, a bit of Byzantine architecture set down on a grassy slope of a lonesome, treeless hillside, beside the rolling Yukon, with no other sign of human habitation in sight except a few Indian huts half a mile away, was a curious introduction to the lingering remnants of the work of Russia's Holy Synod. We do not stop, but are carried on toward the sea, where we find, all along the coast, frequent reminders of the great missionary zeal of

the Greek Church and its stubborn persistence. And that was really as far as Russia's occupation went; her invasion of the interior of her American possessions seldom reached far from the seashore.

The morning of July 27 brought us to the mouth of the Yukon and the shores of Bering Sea, and we find that we have travelled the great artery of the north, from White



Indian School at Holy Cross Mission

Horse to the ocean for a distance of nearly 2,000 miles. It appears, too, that when we shall have reached St. Michael, sixty miles from the mouth of the river, and the only harbour available for our river boat on that shore of Bering Sea, we shall have travelled 1,600 miles from Dawson.

VI

PHASES OF LIFE ON BERING SEA

SEVENTY-FIVE miles from where the waters of the Yukon mingle with the restless tides of Bering Sea, they begin to stray out over the low, flat wastes that border that part of the sea known as Norton Sound. The banks drop low and the tawny floods of the Yukon delta spread farther and farther till, almost without knowing just where, the traveller emerges from the long channel of the great river, cut nearly 2,000 miles through the heart of Alaska, out into the waters of the western sea. The Yukon, like the ancient Nile in at least one particular, has seven mouths, the most southerly of which is ninety miles by sea-coast measurement from the most northerly. Boats from the upper river looking for a harbour must take this northern channel and make all haste, if, fortunately, they find the sea quiet enough for river craft, to St. Michael, sixty miles up the coast from the mouth of the northern outlet. It is a good deal like going to sea in a tub—this thing of venturing out on Norton Sound in a flat-bottomed river boat—and is never undertaken without some degree of trepidation even by the stout-hearted. There is always the serious consideration that Bering Sea can make trouble for river craft on short notice, and the steady progress which the boat makes running at full speed while Captain

Holscher stands in the wheel-house closely scanning the open sea on his left, suggests the thought that we have caught old Neptune asleep and are trying to sneak by while the drowsy fellow isn't looking.

The harbour of St. Michael lies on the north end of the island, and here the senatorial party arrived on the after-



Old Russian Blockhouse at St. Michael

noon of July 27. The whole island is a military reservation and no commercial or transportation interest can get a foothold there, or even make a landing or pitch a tent, except by permission of the United States Government. Several trading and transportation companies engaged in

the Alaskan trade have obtained concessions here and have erected docks and storehouses and hotels and houses for their agents and employees, and for a time made this the great shipping centre of the far Northwest. That was in the boom days of 1898 and '99 and before the White Pass railroad diverted the larger part of the travel and traffic to the Klondike to the shorter route. All these companies have now been consolidated into two or rather all but one have been merged into the Northern Commercial company, the one declining to go into the combination being the North American Transportation and Trading company, which shares the trade and traffic not only of the Yukon but of the Alaskan coast.

St. Michael was occupied in 1835 by the Russians, who established there a military and trading post for the purpose of carrying on the fur trade with the Indians of the lower Yukon country. They fortified the place. Some of the old Russian storehouses are still standing, having been incorporated into the long row of office buildings and storehouses now used by the Northern Commercial company. An old, hexagonal blockhouse on the most prominent point extending out into the harbour is still the repository of half a dozen little rusty Russian cannon, which were once mounted here and at other places around the harbour. The island is treeless, but covered with a heavy growth of coarse, red-top grass, moss and vines. Captain I. N. Hibbard, superintendent of transportation for the Northern Commercial company, and Captain O. J. Humphrey, who occupies a like position for the North Ameri-



Belles of St. Michael

can Transportation and Trading company, entertained the senatorial party most hospitably during a twenty-four-hour stay.

St. Michael is the shopping-place of the curio-hunter. The trading companies have large stocks of Indian wares, which can generally be bought as cheaply in the companies' stores as from the natives themselves. Among the best specimens of the Indians' handicraft are walrus-tusks, carved so as to serve as cribbage boards or as other articles and decorated with crude but not uninteresting designs in black representing feats in hunting or fishing, various Indian sports, the native in his kiak or the antics of the seal. There are miniature sledges, perfect patterns of those in actual use; miniature kiaks and bidarkas, the native seal-skin or walrus-hide boats; seal and bird spears, baskets, masks and a great variety of trinkets carved in walrus ivory.

There are two small Indian villages on the island, and the word small is necessary for accuracy, because it doesn't take more than half a dozen little huts to make an Indian village, which literally swarms with life when the dogs begin to bark and the inhabitants show up to see what is going on. The Indian village, as a sort of appendix to the white man's town, is almost the invariable rule. The Alaska Indian, who knows little of tribal life or relation in these days, haunts the abode of the white man, and is never so happy as when he is imitating as closely as he can the white man's dress and manners. He is a sociable, good-natured chap, and not only enjoys loafing around the

white man's town or camp, but he has provided for the social side of his make-up in various ways. The potlatch is a social function, on which the host usually bankrupts himself. It may take years to provide for such an entertainment, but it is a " charity ball " on a very large scale. All the guests must be provided with gifts—here probably originated the idea of party " favours "—as well as gorged with food; and while the host generally finds himself a pauper at the conclusion of the feast, has he not laid every one of his guests under obligations to him and established a permanent claim on their hospitality? The unfaithful steward of the parable didn't fix himself better with his master's debtors when he wrote off half their indebtedness than the giver of the potlatch has established his future claim for food and shelter on those whom he has feasted and loaded down with presents in the form of blankets, furs, etc. It's a pretty expensive thing to be invited to a potlatch, but it is not recorded that such an invitation was ever refused.

These social functions are often held in what is really the village clubhouse. With their social instincts strongly developed, such a public convenience is a necessity, and into the clubhouse of one of the Indian villages at St. Michael we were invited to witness some native dancing.

This clubhouse is called the " kazhim." This one was a typical structure of the kind, built of logs against the hillside and partly under ground. Entrance in summer is through a hole low down on one side through which we crawled on our hands and knees into an apartment about

20 feet square. In winter this entrance is closed and admission is through a hole in the floor of a sort of antechamber along a small tunnel under the wall of the house and up through a hole in its floor. There are no windows or other means of ventilation and no openings for light or air except a hole in the middle of the roof, through which the smoke from the fire built in the middle of the floor escapes. Around the wall is a wide shelf about 4 feet above the floor on which the Indians sit or recline at their pleasure. Here the men of the village congregate in winter, sometimes bringing some of their curio work, like ladies at a sewing bee, and—I draw the parallel no farther —indulging themselves chiefly in gossip or in the recital of their traditions or in rehearsing exaggerated accounts of their individual prowess and skill in fishing and hunting. Games are also played and dancing forms an important part of the programme. It was this feature of club life in an Eskimo village that we were permitted to witness.

Besides our party of nine and a few from the offices of the commercial companies, there were present a dozen or fifteen natives. After repeated urgings by the headman and considerable conferring probably as to what number from their extensive repertory should be produced for the benefit of the visitors, three men stepped out stripped to the waist and commenced to dance with that grace peculiar to all Indians. There was music by the band, of course, and the instruments were two, one consisting of a piece of tanned sealskin stretched tight over a big hoop, and the other of a large, square, empty tin lard can, on both of



Interior of the Kazhim, St. Michael

which the performers beat rhythmically with sticks, as they uttered a doleful sort of chant, now in a low and nasal monotone, and now raising their voices into a higher key, but never stopping for an instant while the performance was on.

The dancers began posturing, and jumping about stiff-legged, turning now this way and now that, raising their arms and stiffening their muscles in attitudes of defiance and defence. Gradually their excitement increased; the drums beat louder and more rapidly, the bodily contortions became more vigorous and the facial grimaces more fierce; the dancers began to grunt and then to shout in their rough, guttural tones, and the excitement spread to the other Indians, who presently became a sort of chorus, joining in the measured strain. What an absurd performance, indeed! But there is nothing ridiculous or farcical about all this—not to the Indian; he is intense in his seriousness and the expression on every face is as near to that of enthusiasm as it is possible for the Indian to get. At last the dancers begin to show signs of exhaustion; the strenuousness of the performance gradually diminishes and finally it stops. The dancers gasp for breath and stagger about while the sweat rolls from their glistening bodies. The show is over, the story of personal or of tribal achievement and valour has been told and there is nothing more to be done except to snap the camera as one of the dancers stands for an instant under the opening in the roof, and then to seek the outer air, which smells and tastes sweeter than it ever did before. No admission fee



The McCulloch at Sea

to this unique performance is accepted; this is the part which the Indian villagers play in the entertainment of the party from " Boston-land."

The revenue-cutter service is a branch of the public service with which those of us who live in the interior have little to do and of which the most of us probably know little. We may not generally know, for instance, that it is really older, as an organisation of the Government, than the navy, and that it was established in 1789 with the aid of vessels belonging to some of the original states which they, as colonies, had employed for coast defence before the federal Government was formed. Any history of Alaska must deal more or less with the revenue-cutter service, because it has had more to do with the administration of affairs than any other agency of the Government in Alaska. Some account of this service belongs in this story not only on account of the important part it bears in the conduct of public business in Alaska, but because one of the revenue ships was the home of the senatorial party for a period of twenty-eight days. Before leaving home Senator Dillingham had arranged with the treasury department to have the revenue cutter McCulloch meet the senatorial party at St. Michael and convey us thence on the remainder of our journey back to Seattle. This vessel was found waiting for us at St. Michael when we arrived.

Captain W. C. Coulson received us on board Tuesday evening, July 28, just a month after we left Seattle and 2,988 miles from that sound port by way of the inside

passage to Skagway, the White Pass railroad and the Yukon River.

The McCulloch, it will be remembered, was Admiral Dewey's dispatch boat at Manila and carried from Manila



Captain Coulson

to Hongkong the first account of the brilliant engagement in Manila Bay, May 1, 1898. It was also the first of the Asiatic squadron to become a target for the fire of the Spanish guns. It was during the night of April 30, when Admiral Dewey was leading his fleet under cover of darkness past Corregidor Island that the smoke-stack of the McCulloch, which was last in the line, suddenly began to burn out and belch forth flames like an iron furnace.

The flaming chimney at once attracted the attention of the Spanish garrison in the Corregidor fortress and the first shot of the war of the Philippines was fired at that shining mark with the result that usually followed Spanish marksmanship.

The McCulloch was built in 1897, just in time to get into business at Manila, where it was attached to the Asiatic squadron, according to the custom which makes the revenue cutters a part of the naval service in time of war. This vessel is a handsome craft, 219 feet long, having a tonnage of 869, and a record on her trial test of 17 1-2 knots, or 20 miles, an hour. She is of composite construction, which means that her hull to the water-line is built of wood and above of steel. These revenue cutters are often obliged to go on long cruises and experience shows that wooden bottoms do not become so foul as steel bottoms.

Alexander Hamilton was the founder of the revenue-cutter service. He obtained authority first in 1789 to employ persons to serve in boats in harbours and along shore to aid in collecting the revenue. He appreciated also that only persons of the most trustworthy character were desirable for this service, otherwise they "would probably serve to screen fraud rather than to detect it." Great pains was therefore taken in the enlistment of officers and men, and the high standard then recognised as necessary has been maintained ever since.

The duties imposed upon this arm of the service are to aid in the enforcement of the customs revenue laws, render

assistance to vessels in distress, enforce quarantine regulations, compel observance of the neutrality laws and the laws governing merchant vessels, protect wrecked property, prevent depredations on Government timber lands, guard the seal and other fisheries, prevent the sale of arms and liquors to Indians, aid in the establishment and maintenance of life-saving stations, supervise the lighthouse service, aid in the coast survey, assist in scientific exploration and in general stand in readiness to do anything that may be required to promote the safety of life and property along our ocean fronts as well as on the Great Lakes. The revenue cutters on the Pacific coast are equipped with several guns. The McCulloch has two rapid-fire guns and also two magazine guns that were once in service on the Reina Cristina, the Spanish flagship at Manila.

In time of war the officers and vessels of the revenue-cutter service, which in peace are under the direction of the treasury or revenue department of the Government, are placed under the command of the navy department, and in all our wars, both against foreign foes and during the great rebellion, they have rendered valiant service to the country. The Harriet Lane, a revenue cutter, was attached to the Fort Sumter relief expedition in 1861, and the first shot of the rebellion fired from a loyal ship was discharged from her deck. It was when her commander had treacherously surrendered the McClelland to the rebels, and Ritchie, a subordinate officer, had torn down the Confederate flag, run up again the Stars and Stripes, and had

succeeded in delivering the ship to General Butler at New Orleans, that General Dix delivered that famous order: "If any man attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot."

The history of the service is full of deeds of heroism performed not alone under the inspiration of war, but at times when there was only the incentive of a sense of duty. The courage which braves the dangers of the ice fields of Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean, which battles with darkness and storm in the life-saving service, the devotion to duty which sends officers and men into plague-infested ports and keeps them there to enforce quarantine and carry aid and comfort where pestilence stalks, the superb and unfaltering heroism which sent a Jarvis and a Call and a Bertholf 1,800 miles afoot across the ice fields of Alaska in midwinter at the constant and imminent risk of their own lives that they might save the lives of the imprisoned whalers at Point Barrow—these things are seldom mentioned and rarely if ever heard of by the general public, but they make up a large part of the life work of our revenue-cutter service and particularly that part of it which patrols our North Pacific coast line.

It is 111 miles from St. Michael across Norton Sound to Nome, where we arrive in rough weather on the morning of July 29. It was not so rough we couldn't land, but rough enough to involve some danger and afford the senatorial committee a practical demonstration of the need of better landing facilities. The people of Nome seemed, somehow, not to regret very cordially that we



A Section of Nome

had some adventures in getting ashore. Nome, it will be remembered, has no harbour. It stands on the open sea, exposed to the storms that sweep northward across Bering Sea over an unbroken stretch of over 700 miles. The location of the town was determined not by any regard for natural landing facilities, but by the discovery of the gold-bearing beach sands. Bering Sea is shoal and the slope of the beach very gradual; it is impossible for seagoing ships to go within less than a mile of land. Passengers and freight must be taken off on lighters and it often happens that ships cannot unload either passengers or freight or even the mails for several days after arrival. The only shelter on that bleak and dangerous coast is that afforded by a small island ten or fifteen miles away, behind which vessels are sometimes obliged to retreat to avoid dragging their anchors and being dashed to pieces on shore. And our experiences with the risks and delays incident to landing and embarking were not confined to the difficulties we encountered on arrival. We were obliged to wait thirty-six hours after the intended date of departure till the sea had quieted down so that we might venture out to our ship, and were observant during that time of the arrival of two ships outside, neither of which could land a single man till the storm subsided. One of them, a mail ship from St. Michael, was forced to carry passengers and mail back again—mail that we were particularly anxious to receive as it was supposed to contain letters for our party, and, as a matter of fact, did, as we afterwards learned.

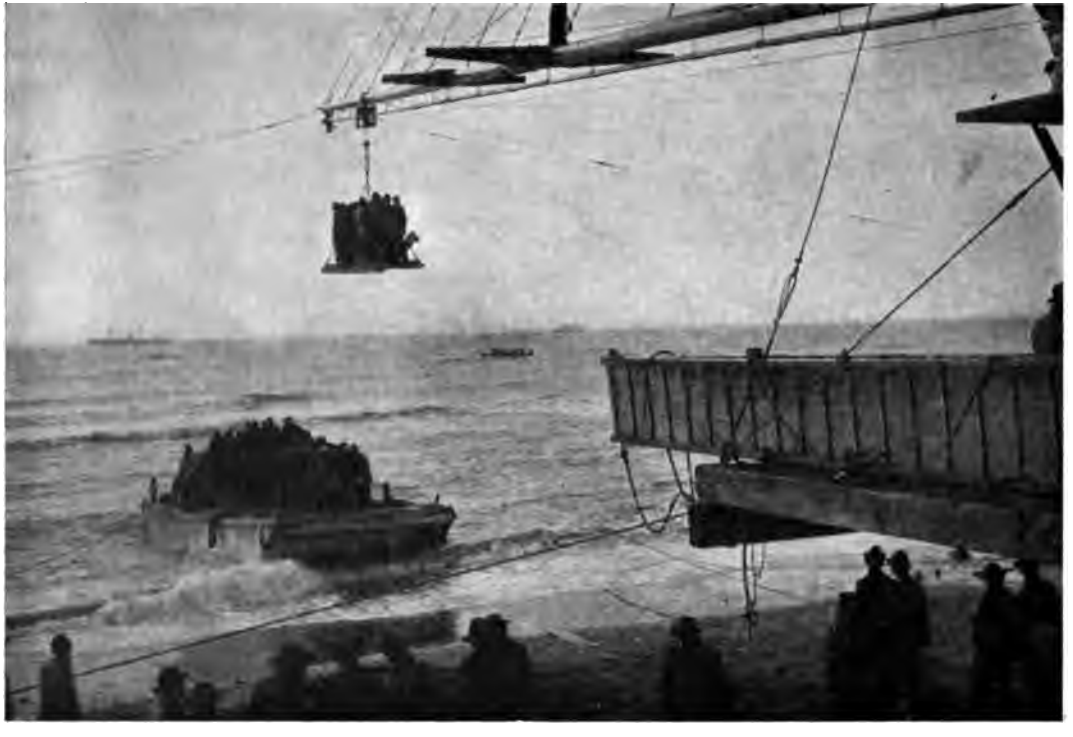


A Bit of Nome Surf

The first glimpse of Nome, obtained by the aid of our field-glasses, showed a low, treeless coast, and along the water's edge for a mile or more stretched a thin line of frame buildings, some two stories and a few more pretentious in height, crowded so close to the water's edge as to suggest danger from the waves.

Our vessel came to anchor about 9 o'clock, and a small steam tug was presently observed coming to meet us, while further in we presently discovered a dory mounting one wave after another and bringing the quarantine officer. It was so rough that the tug could not come alongside, but stood off and sent a dory to convey us over to it. The second load consisted of Senators Nelson, Dillingham and Burnham and the transfer from the dory to the tug was attended with so much difficulty, and the tug itself seemed such an unsafe dependence as it rolled and tossed about, that the senators elected to stay in the dory and be towed ashore. That soon proved to be impracticable and extremely dangerous; the line was cast off by the oarsmen in the dory and the three senators were rowed ashore, where they arrived in safety, but not without a wetting in the surf. Those of us on the tug were transferred just outside the breakers to a stout, flat-bottomed barge, which was hauled in by a cable from shore till it grounded on the beach sands. We were then picked up from the deck of the barge in a cage let down from a long, projecting beam and carried up over the surf to a high platform on land.

And that is the way passengers and freight are unloaded



Landing at Nome

and loaded at Nome the greater part of the time. A small stream, the Snake River, comes down from the hills, flows through the west end of the town, turns along the land side of a sandspit for half a mile and then cuts through into the sea. The people of Nome believe that a jetty built out from the mouth of this stream and the dredging out of a sandbar that lies across the entrance would make it practicable for small vessels and lighters to pass through to a safe harbour inside the sandspit, and the senatorial committee were urged to procure an appropriation of $150,000 for such an improvement. Lighterage costs from $3.50 to $5 a ton for ordinary merchandise and more for heavy machinery, and it was contended that on the 50,000 to 60,000 tons of freight handled there every year the cost would be reduced enough to pay for the improvement in two years.

About the first of June a fleet of merchant vessels sails from Seattle for Nome. It is all open sea till they get through the Aleutian chain at Unimak pass and for some distance northward in Bering Sea, but sooner or later they encounter the ice fields. The ice is breaking up and floating down from the north, and there is great strife to see which ship will force its way through the ice and land its passengers and freight and mail at Nome first. The voyage from Seattle to Nome is made ordinarily in six or seven days, but the race is not always to the swift or the first in starting, for, at the opening of navigation, it sometimes happens that the vessel which for a time seems to lead in the race gets caught in an ice-pack and is



Arriving at Nome a Little Early

forced to wait for it to break while it sees its rivals move on through open water to their destination. The ice breaks up in Bering Sea in front of Nome about June 15 as a rule and closes that port, if it may be called a port, about October 10. The open season at Nome is over then and from that time till the 15th or 20th of June that great camp and all the Seward Peninsula are absolutely cut off from the outside world except through a monthly letter mail and the recently installed Government telegraph service.



The Senate "Goes in the Air"

This fact has developed a great deal of interest there in the powerful ice-breaking boats built by the Russian Government for the purpose of keeping open the port of Cronstadt on the Baltic Sea. In 1898 the largest of these vessels, the Ermak, was put in service and it is authoritatively stated has ploughed its way through solid ice fourteen feet thick for a distance of

200 miles. It is 305 feet long, its displacement is 8,000 tons and it carries 3,000 tons of coal; its engines have 10,000 horsepower, and it is so constructed that when it fails to plough through the ice it literally climbs up on the edge of it and breaks it down by its enormous weight. It is credited with having made thirty miles in eight hours through very heavy ice. Nome is about five degrees further north than Cronstadt, but it is believed that the ice field in Bering Sea could be traversed as successfully in winter by such a vessel as the Baltic, and they would like to see our Government undertake it. The proposition is certainly an interesting one, and as Alaska is developed and becomes more populous it may seem to our Government to be a desirable thing to do. It is not improbable, however, that improved facilities of transportation and communication by land will be found to be more practical and more economical.

VII

NOME AND THE GOLD FIELDS OF THE SEWARD PENINSULA

TAKE a low, sandy beach, one without a tree within fifty miles; show a white line where the waves break into foam along the shore; stretch along the water's edge for a mile or more a double row of frame buildings, most of them two stories high and facing each other; cover the street between with boards laid on the sand; don't be very particular about making the street lines straight nor insist that the street shall have uniform width; let the elevation and the width of the sidewalks be determined by chance, it produces more variety and claims closer attention from the pedestrian; fill the lower floors of the buildings along this street with business undertakings of various kinds, and the upper floors reserve for living purposes; throw in a liberal portion of places devoted to the gratification of highly developed thirsts; fill the air at frequent intervals with the sounds of rag-time music; gather on the sidewalk and in the narrow street groups of men who seem to have nothing in particular to do and are doing it; then go back from the first street and locate a church or two, a schoolhouse, a federal courthouse and custom-house, sprinkle around a few small buildings for residence purposes; fill the air

with a cold drizzle, and you may have the materials out of which were obtained my first impressions of Nome, on the morning of July 29.

Nome is on the south shore of the Seward Peninsula, that portion of Alaska which reaches farthest out toward



Main Street in Nome

Siberia, and is only 120 miles from Cape Prince of Wales, the extreme point on the Alaskan coast between which and the Siberian shore flows Bering Strait. The name Bering Strait recalls those impressions we used to get from our school geographies. I don't know what your youthful ambitions were, but Bering Sea and all that belongs to it were associated in my mind with remoteness more unattain-

able than the highlands of Thibet or the jungles of Africa. But that was long before the magnet of gold began to draw thousands across that bleak and stormy water, before the soldiers of fortune began to storm the icy palisades of the north, and sweep through the watery pass into the Arctic Ocean and explore its inhospitable shores, not for fame or knowledge, but for the precious yellow metal.

Nome is something of a summer resort, judging not by its attractions for pleasure-seekers, but solely by the fluctuations in population. About 2,500 people spend the winter there every year while the summer arrivals approximate 6,000 annually. Not all of them, of course, remain in Nome any considerable length of time, but this greatest and most wonderful and most interesting of Alaskan cities is the gateway through which arrive and depart the thousands who are scattered over the richest gold field of equal area on the American continent, and probably the richest in the world, the Seward Peninsula.

I have spoken in a previous chapter of its deplorable lack of harbour facilities and protection for shipping, and if there were any other point on the south side of this peninsula any better favoured in this particular it is probable that it would sooner or later, and not much later, take the place Nome now occupies with respect to the Alaskan trade. It was the discovery of gold in the beach sands and on the creeks near by which determined the location of this city; there was no other influence at work in it. While the boom is over and the multitudes attracted by the first discoveries and the chance to stand on the beach and wash



Nome in 1899

out $100 to $300 a day have melted away, thousands of tons of merchandise are received here every week, supplying the 12,500 to 15,000 people who are scattered over the peninsula; and of the $6,000,000 to $7,500,000 of gold taken out of Alaska annually, two-thirds goes out of Nome.

The reception accorded the senatorial party at Nome was hospitality itself. This was the first stopping place since leaving Dawson, where there were any considerable number of ladies. Here they had assumed the responsibility for a formal reception and ball the first night after our arrival. This very "swell" event took place in the Arctic Brotherhood hall, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion. This hall is the social centre of Nome and the members of the brotherhood and their wives constitute the "400." Their hall was formerly a theatre, and, slightly remodelled, it provides splendid accommodations for every sort of social function. It is a kind of clubhouse and here the best element of Nome socially struggles almost nightly through the long winter against thoughts of home and of the leagues of impassable ice and snow which lie between them and the outside world. Dancing and cards avail when more serious occupations fail to beguile the lonesome hours. For it should be understood that there is very little to do in Nome in winter. The mining has stopped almost entirely, the ships come no more, half the people have gone "outside"; the rest eat and sleep and amuse themselves and wait for summer to come again.



The Senatorial Banquet at Nome.

This is the situation from November to June. Add to this the fact that for a long time in winter the sun almost fails to come up, rises but a short distance above the ice packs of the Bering Sea and four hours later sinks out of sight again. The gloom of the long Arctic night contributes materially to the depression which at last overcomes the winter resident in spite of his effort to resist it. All these things, together with the close association of the inhabitants of this "desert island," produce a peculiar result. As one lady expressed it: "I get tired of my best friends, and I know that they get tired of me because they act like it. From cordial friendship and real enjoyment of each other at the beginning of the 'shut in' period, we come to tolerate and finally to feel a positive aversion for each other, till along in the spring when the days lengthen and the sun comes back and we can get outdoors, and begin to count the weeks and then the days till the first ship may be expected—then we get over it and we are friends again."

The Kegoayah Kozga, the woman's club of Nome, were hostesses at the ball. If you think this was a blue-flannel-shirt, pants-in-your-boots, cartridge-belt and knife-sheath affair, that shows how mistaken you are about Nome. There were a few men present who were not in evening dress, but very few, while the ladies had had time since the arrival of the first boats from the States, those of them who were in Nome all winter, to prepare the new dresses they had planned for this special event. It was a brilliant occasion and was certainly worth what it cost in

the impression it gave to the senators of the kind of men and women there are in farthest Alaska.

For the banquet the next evening at the same place the hall was entirely redecorated. One hundred and twenty-five of the leading men sat down with the senatorial party and after a dinner served in first-class style the requests and suggestions prepared by the general committee of citizens, as to legislation by Congress, were formally presented. The extremely favourable impressions created the previous evening were strengthened by this well-conducted and creditable affair. It is doubtful if anything observed or experienced during the entire trip of the senatorial party did more to promote the interests of Alaska than these social events at Nome, so well calculated to create the most favourable impressions with regard to the character of the people who are developing the resources of the great country, of whose natural wealth the general public has such inadequate knowledge.

So much has been written about the wonderful results of washing the beach sands at Nome for gold and the beach sands proved to be so rich that the impression has prevailed in some quarters that not only has this been the source of the greater part of the gold output of the Nome district, but the important discoveries in this district are supposed to have been made first on the beach. This is not quite true, however. The first discovery of gold in the beach sands was made at Sinook, a point about twenty-five miles west of Nome. This led to some prospecting in the vicinity of Nome, but the prospectors were not then

fortunate in finding in the beach sand paying quantities of gold, and they proceeded inland, where the first important discoveries were made on Anvil Creek and on Snow and Glacier gulches. H. L. Blake claims the credit for having made the original discovery. Some prospecting had been done in 1896 and 1897 in the region of Golofnin Bay and on the streams flowing into it. Word was brought there, to a camp near the Swedish Lutheran mission, of discoveries of gold in the beach sands at Sinook. Blake made up a party, including Hultberg, the Swedish missionary, to investigate the Sinook rumours. They found nothing of importance there, and soon returned to the creeks above Nome. On the 26th and 27th of July, 1898, they prospected in that vicinity but staked no claims.

A little later the same season Erick C. Lindblom, John Brinterson and Jafet Linderberg went to Anvil Creek, where they staked out claims. They also staked on Snow and Glacier gulches. These men were the first to discover a sufficient quantity of gold in the Nome district to induce them to stake a claim, and are probably entitled to be regarded as the real discoverers. Some of the claims they then staked proved to be very valuable, and were ultimately the properties over which occurred that famous litigation which resulted in the removal of a judge of the United States district court and the marshal of the district from their official positions.

The bitter animosities which were developed between individuals and factions in Nome at that time were not

exposed to the visiting senators, but they can be dug up very easily there at any time if one manifests the slightest interest in tales of woe.

The second day in the Nome district was spent out on the creeks among the miners and prospectors. The Seward Peninsula is just about as well equipped with good wagon roads as is all the rest of Alaska; that is to say, it hasn't any. Nome, however, has a railroad. It is nine miles long and "all under one management." It is called the Wild Goose railroad. A narrow-gauge track laid over the tundra winds around among the hills and along the gulches, over which runs a light train made up of two side-gear locomotives adapted to steep grades, and covered so that they look like box cars, but capable of pulling a heavy load. The passenger "coaches" are flat cars, some with roof and some without; but this little railroad is so much of an improvement over none at all that without it many of the claims within reach of it could not be profitably worked on account of the cost of transportation of supplies and machinery.

In a placer mining country a sufficient water supply is quite as essential to success as the gold itself, and at Nome two companies are engaged in building ditches and distributing water for use, not only on their own properties, but for sale to other mine owners. A pumping plant belonging to C. D. Lane's company stands near the railroad track about a mile and a half from Nome, from which point it is pumping water up into the mines eight or nine miles away and 800 feet higher up on Anvil Creek and

Snow and Glacier gulches. Another company on the other side of Anvil Mountain, the Campion company, is also constructing an immense system of ditches and providing for the distribution of water on a large scale. During the summer of 1904 the Wild Goose mining company paid $1,000,000 for a controlling interest in the sixty miles of ditches and pipes of the Miocene Canal company, and announced a reduction in water rates to other mines besides their own. Such improvements as this not only suggest confidence in the permanency of the gold deposit, but they are establishing the only possible conditions under which the immense wealth of that rich, gold-bearing section may be successfully developed.

Near the end of the railroad the whole company left the train and mounted horses. Among the mines visited was Discovery, on Anvil Creek, and in our company was Jafet Linderberg, one of the discoverers and locators of this claim. Linderberg is now a millionaire. When he started on the trip which led to this great discovery he was an employé of the Government at one of the reindeer stations, from which service he obtained a release in order that he might engage in prospecting. He is a fine-looking, gentlemanly-appearing young fellow, exceedingly diffident, but a brief conversation with him develops the fact that he is a man of intelligence and capacity, a fact which helps explain his election to the presidency of the Pioneer Mining company, a strong corporation which owns Discovery and other valuable claims on Anvil and nearby creeks. Another interesting member of our company was

Mr. Linderberg's bride, who was spending her honeymoon on the scene of her husband's very fortunate operations.

A few days before our arrival no little excitement had been created in Nome, where thrills of this kind make



Jafet Linderberg and Party

life endurable, by the discovery of a pocket on Nikkala gulch, where " Caribou Bill," whose name isn't Bill at all, but Thomas Dettern, one of those unscientific, unlettered, lucky chaps, had struck a pocket in his mine which produced $1,285 from twelve pans in a yard of gravel; this was at the rate of $10,700 to the cubic yard, and naturally produced a sensation while it lasted. This property was on

the route of the day's travel and not far from the "Hot Air" mine, which was just now being successfully washed out by means of a hydraulic giant. Other mines were visited on Snow Gulch and Dexter Creek, illustrating the different methods of handling the gravel, some by hydraulic lifts and others by simply shovelling the gravel from the bedrock into the sluice boxes.

One of the most interesting propositions, as the miners say, was the Snow Flake mine, where a shaft had been sunk to a depth of 130 feet to a bed of pay gravel. This is supposed to be a deposit similar to that found on bedrock in the gulches and along the streams, but, by a change in the face of nature, to have been covered with earth to this depth. The gravel is taken out of this underground deposit and sluiced out, just as if scooped from the surface of the ground as in other mining operations there. The work of taking out the ore can be carried on all winter, but the sluicing must wait, of course, for summer weather.

An interesting fact developed here was the depth of the frost line. As has been heretofore stated, perpetual ice is found practically all over Alaska at a depth of two or three feet. That is to say, the surface thaws only about that much during the summer. The close covering of grass and moss protects the surface of the ground so thoroughly from the rays of the sun that the frost is not disturbed at a greater depth. The question naturally arose: How deep is the frost line? I asked this question a number of times on the trip through Alaska, but no one seemed to have found the limit of ice. Here, however, I was told that the



A Clean-up on "No. 8 Above," on Anvil Creek

ground was frozen solidly for a depth of ninety-five feet, and a drill working in another shaft nearby afforded partial confirmation of this statement, as it was still chipping the ice at an apparent depth of sixty feet.

An excellent lunch was served to the entire party of twenty-five or thirty at the messhouse of the Wild Goose company and we were then invited to witness a clean-up on "No. 8 Above," on Anvil Creek, which means the eighth claim above the original discovery claim. This claim belongs to Mr. Linderberg's company, but was being worked on a "lay," which is the miners' term for a percentage lease, by the Wild Goose company. The sluice box shown in the accompanying illustration had been running two days and when the riffles had been taken up and the gold in the bottom literally shovelled up, it was found that there was more than a miner's pailful, the value of which was nearly $8,000. And beautiful stuff it was, too. The Nome gold is brighter and prettier than that which is found in the Klondike and assays $2 or so more to the ounce—about $15 to $17 in the one case and $16 to $19 in the other. The greater part of it is in fine particles about the size of the grains of rock salt, or smaller, but a great many nuggets worth from $2 to $7 were found in this clean-up. I saw one piece that day said to be worth $300, and have learned that after we left there a nugget was taken from one of these Anvil Creek bench claims which weighed out $3,285.90.

Late in the season of 1904 a sensational discovery was made on Little Creek, about three miles from Nome and

between the city and the centre of operations on Anvil Creek. Pans of gravel yielded as high as $135 and one pan is said to have contained ten ounces of gold or $170. The deposit is found at a depth of forty-two feet and



Sluice Boxes on Anvil Creek

promises to rival the original discovery on Anvil Creek, of which ore streak it is probably a continuation. The lucky discoverer is J. C. Brown, a pioneer on the peninsula.

Did I get the fever? No, not exactly, but when you see the yellow metal gathered up by the panful and see it picked up in chunks as big as hen's eggs, you no longer wonder at the fascination which holds the prospector to his life of solitude and privation from year to year. Hope

never fails; he hasn't "struck it rich" yet; but he may to-morrow. I saw, on an island off the south coast of Alaska, a typical prospector—a prospector is a miner who hasn't struck it yet. This old man was bent with age and crippled by rheumatism. He came aboard our ship to get some medicine from the ship's doctor. The doctor ministered to him the best he could, but told him plainly that he had a serious infirmity and that if he didn't stop work, stop camping on the ground and take good care of himself he would soon die. The old fellow limped down the gangway to his little boat, saying that he was just about to strike a rich lead and he couldn't stop now. Our pilot knew him; he had a family in San Francisco and sons able and willing to care for him, but he preferred the great game of chance to which he had given twenty years of his life already, and lived in hope. Some day he will be found dead in his cabin, and his name, unlike those of the few fortunates, but like the great majority of gold-seekers, will not be read in the newspapers.

But not all the prospecting or all the mining of western Alaska is going on in the vicinity of Nome. Thanks to our exceedingly defective mining laws it is possible for the dog in the manger to play his part in Alaska to the limit, and he is doing it. There is nothing to prevent a single prospector from staking as much ground as he pleases, and where the indications are good he pleases to stake everything in sight. Owing to these same legal defects he may hold his claims indefinitely without doing anything to develop them, if only he is clever about it. And he is

holding them, in more than nine cases out of ten, hoping that some one will come and buy them or till some one, thinking they have been abandoned, files on them. If they prove to be valuable he is then prepared to pounce on the one who has spent the money to prove their value and,



Washing out Gold with a "Long Tom" near Nome

aided by a lot of others of the manger breed, compel him to pay a large sum for a quit claim or to divide the output, or possibly to vacate altogether. The senatorial committee took stenographic reports here and at all the places visited of the recommendations of miners and business men and lawyers, and will undoubtedly endeavour to so change the mining laws as to compel those who do not

develop their claims to abandon them so that others may make them productive.

This dog-in-the-manger practice has had one partially compensating result—it has compelled the late comers to go on further into unprospected parts of the peninsula and develop the fact that there is "pay dirt" scattered pretty nearly all over the peninsula. Some of it is of too low grade to admit of profitable mining by the crude methods of the pan and the rocker, but may be made exceedingly profitable when handled by machinery on an economical scale. It is no exaggeration to say that there are thousands and thousands of acres of ground on the Seward Peninsula alone which will pay rich returns when they come to be handled by improved methods. That means that large numbers of individual claims must pass into the hands of a few having capital; that the business of taking gold out of Alaska has scarcely commenced; that it will yet become a permanent industry—as permanent as coal mining in Pennsylvania—and that it will take generations to exhaust the mineral wealth of those marvellously rich and marvellously extensive gold fields.

Other sections of the peninsula where important gold-mining operations are going on are the Council City district, seventy-five miles northeast of Nome and forty or fifty miles from the sea; the Solomon River country in the same direction, but not so far away, and along several of the streams flowing into Kotzebue Sound on the north side of Seward Peninsula. The Council City district is becoming the scene of very important operations. Con-

siderable quantities of machinery have been taken into that section through Golofnin Bay and by boats up the river. A short railroad supplements the river craft, cheapening transportation and adding to the profit of mining. A railroad is also under way from the coast up the Solomon River and it is expected that eventually it will connect with the Council City road, and also be extended westward along the beach to Nome. This railroad construction suggests the confidence of the builders in the future of these mining districts.

Nome is an incorporated city. The board of aldermen elect one of their number to the office of mayor. Of course, there is no lack of that element which is the curse of every mining camp; but good order seems to be maintained and perhaps is not so difficult to secure, for a part of the year, at least, as in the frontier towns in the States, from the fact that in winter, which means eight months of the year there, escape from the officers of the law is extremely difficult. The fugitive from justice who leaves Nome in winter is likely to be found in some melting snowbank when spring comes. When he leaves Nome there is no other place to which he can go. The federal authorities had taken a hand in the suppression of vice and public gambling just prior to the senatorial visit. Nome was up-to-date in another important particular, too. It had an aldermanic boodle trial in progress. Nome has a good school building, several churches, and two semi-weekly newspapers that are creditable to the city, the *Nugget* and the *Gold-Digger*. The city is built of wood, as are all the

other towns of Alaska. No fire insurance is written here except on the warehouses of the large commercial companies. The fire service uses in summer water from the main which brings in the city supply by gravity from the



Curio Peddlers at Nome

hills, but in winter water for fighting fires must be pumped from the sea through the ice.

Living in Nome is much less expensive than in any other part of northern and central Alaska because it has ocean transportation, and in summer, when Bering Sea is open, prices are not much higher than in Seattle.

Fort Davis, with its garrison of one company, is three miles east of Nome, on the beach, but since the early days

of beach mining the soldiers have had little to do. There is also an equipment for a life-saving station for which Congress, in its inability to appreciate properly any of its duties toward Alaska, has provided no crew. It would take $5,000 to $6,000 to maintain a crew for four months when the sea is open, but that is a trifling sum compared to the importance of the work to be done. During our stay two expert oarsmen and swimmers were capsised in the surf and were rescued with great difficulty and nearly dead. Many lives are lost there every year, which might be saved if this station were manned at the light expense mentioned.

In summer Nome gets mail on nearly every steamer from Seattle, but in winter letters, but no papers, are supposed to be brought from Dawson once a month, although the service is uncertain. One of the severest hardships of winter residence in Nome is the fact that it takes at least a hundred days to get an answer by mail from any place in the central or eastern part of the United States. What this often implies in the way of anxiety and homesickness and mental depression can be imagined. Insanity is not unknown in Alaska. Telegraphic communication now established with the outside world, and bringing the most important news of the day, will do much to relieve the long Arctic winter of its dreariness and gloom.

The Nome district, by which is meant the Seward Peninsula, has appeared in the gold reports for eight years. The total output, including 1903, is approximately $28,000,000. The production of the Nome district and

all Alaska for the year 1904 is not yet officially stated, but judging by preliminary estimates from official sources it will approximate $6,000,000, more than two-thirds of it coming from the Nome district. This is at least a million dollars under reasonable expectations for present development, the shortage being due to an insufficient water supply and a short sluicing season. The water furnished by the ditch companies is taken now from what might be described as local sources, and a season of light rainfall or a season of light snowfall, which sometimes follow each other, as happened last year, creates a water famine, so to speak. What the Nome district needs, along with better facilities for transportation over land, is a larger and more permanent water supply. Some time this will undoubtedly be obtained from the Kigluaik Mountains, 40 miles to the northward. There an abundant water supply can be had for all mining operations, and the fall would also provide power which could be converted into electricity and applied to the various mining operations.

When you compare the gold of Nome with the value of the crops in a good agricultural section of equal area in the United States it does not amount to much; but it must be borne in mind that the entire white population of Alaska is only 30,000, about that of an average county in the Middle States, and that the Nome gold-bearing area has scarcely been touched as yet.

Some interesting facts bearing upon what it costs to produce the world's gold supply, even from so rich a district as the Seward Peninsula, are afforded by the statis-

tics of travel and traffic with that section. Seattle shipped during the season of 1903, 110,750 tons of freight to Nome and St. Michael. The value, on the basis of $100 a ton, was $11,750,000. The freight on this merchandise ranged from $7 to $22.50 per ton, while the 5,553 people, who shipped at Seattle for Nome, paid from $30 to $125 apiece for their passage. Now all this outlay, to say nothing of the time of ten or twelve thousand people engaged, taken into account and compared with the gold output of gold mining in Alaska, does not look like a very profitable business. But when did gold or silver mining ever distribute its favours impartially? It is a great game, in which few men win and many lose. It will be always so. Some men win enormous fortunes, and their good luck will always attract many more, a few of whom will be successful. Every man thus attracted hopes that he will be the next favourite of chance, and so he struggles on in Alaska, in Colorado, in Africa. The world's supply of gold is constantly added to, but it costs more, all things considered, than it represents in value or purchasing power.

Coal costs $17 to $20 a ton in Nome, and $45 to $50 a ton 25 miles in the interior. Coal has been found on the Yukon, and on the west coast of Alaska, the most important discovery being that at Cape Lisburne, where it is mined for commercial purposes. Alaska's coal, however, so far as discovered, is comparatively of inferior grade and does not figure as an important resource of the country. A more promising fuel supply is found in the

manufacture of peat from the thick matted mass of roots and vines which cover the tundra, and which, when prepared as peat is prepared, will make an excellent fuel, and for fuel purposes in the interior is likely to come into use. The Seward Peninsula, it should be understood, is barren of timber, and the only fuel supply of the natives, prior to the arrival of white men, was the driftwood brought down by the Yukon and cast upon the shore.

NOTE.—Among the exhibits in the Alaska building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition was a quantity of tin ore from Cape York, in the extreme western part of the Seward Peninsula. How extensive or how important these deposits are has not been fully determined, but the indications are favourable. Fourteen claims are said to have been sold in one group for $40,000, and owners of some of these deposits are seeking to have smelters erected at Seattle in order to create there a market for their ore.

VIII

THE SEAL ISLANDS

BERING SEA is a lonesome corner of the Earth. It is considerably less than 200 years since it began to be navigated at all by white men. Alaska was discovered in 1741. Some unsuccessful voyages in that direction had been made shortly before that time, but long after navigators had circled the globe and had become familiar with the waters of the southern oceans and after the habitable world had been pretty thoroughly explored in all other directions, the fur traders of Russia began to venture out across the unknown seas to the eastward of Siberia in their crude and clumsy and unseaworthy vessels.

The story of Russian discovery in northwest America is full of disaster. Scores of ships and hundreds of lives were lost both before and after the voyage of discovery, which was not accomplished without the death of Vitus Bering himself, shipwrecked on a bleak and desolate island in the sea which bears his name. Russian occupation of the Alaskan coast—the Russians can hardly be said to have occupied the interior—finally came to require the service of many ships to maintain communication between the Russian-American fur-trading posts and the ports of the Siberian coast. But for forty years and more the ves-

sels of the Russian traders continued to plough the waters of this northern sea, bringing merchandise of many kinds and carrying back the furs and pelts, before they discovered that bonanza of the fur traders, the fur-seal islands. They had taken the seal at sea and had learned the value of the pelts, but it was not until 1786 that Gerassim Pribylov, after repeated efforts to follow the seals on their northward migration in the spring, discovered their destination. Groping cautiously among the fog banks, he heard one morning the barking of myriads of these curious animals and knew that the object of his search must be near. The island coasts are usually rocky and dangerous, and he approached cautiously till the fog lifted and revealed the low-lying islands with their rocky shores swarming with millions of seals. The mystery of the summer migration of the fur seals was solved; here on these islands, which bear their discoverer's name, was their breeding place, and here on these rocks they were killed by the million for their valuable skins, till the indiscriminate slaughter had well-nigh exterminated them and it became necessary to set a limit to the yearly catch in order to save the species from extinction.

Our approach to the seal islands was attended with difficulties similar to those encountered by their discoverer.

The revenue-cutter McCulloch, having on board the senatorial party, sailed from Nome, Saturday afternoon, August 1. For two days the surf had rolled so high against the beach that no boat of any description could live in it for five minutes. Outside, a mile from shore, lay

our ship and several others, but no one dared venture across the foaming flood. Saturday about noon the wind fell, and in that shallow sea the falling of the wind is soon followed by the subsidence of the waves. At three o'clock we were on board, and an hour later, Nome, lying along the low shore, had disappeared from sight and we were steaming southward over Bering Sea bound for the seal islands, 500 miles southward.

Our course lay a little to the westward from the track of the steamers bound from Seattle to Nome. All night and nearly all day Sunday we ploughed our lonesome way through fog and mist and rain. The fog whistle sounded every five minutes, but not a sail nor an answering sound broke the solitude of that unfrequented sea. Toward evening the navigator knew we must be approaching the seal islands and we went ahead at slow speed till suddenly St. George, the smaller and the more southerly of the two, came into view. We desired, however, to stop at St. Paul, the larger island, and thither we returned and found a safe anchorage near the village. Lieutenant Barker was sent ashore to arrange for a visit by the senatorial committee the next morning.

When Alaska was purchased in 1867 by Secretary Seward, these islands, as well as the Aleutian chain and all the islands in Bering Sea east of a direct line drawn from the middle of Bering Strait to a point midway between the most westerly of the Aleutian chain and the Commander Islands, off the coast of Kamschatka, came into the possession of the United States. In order to con-

serve the sealing industry, the exclusive privilege of taking the seals on the islands was granted to the Alaska Commercial company. The concession was for a period of twenty years and ran from 1870 to 1890. The privilege passed then for a like period to the North American Commercial company. The Government maintains an agent and an assistant on St. Paul Island and an assistant on St. George, to see that the terms of the concession are complied with. The company have agents on both islands to carry on their business.

When the islands were discovered by the Russians, there were no human inhabitants, and that fact, together with the rocky shores, low and easily climbed by them, no doubt determined the selection of these islands by the seals as their breeding grounds. In order to carry on the fur-sealing business successfully, the Russians brought from the Aleutian Islands several hundred natives and established them on the seal islands as their permanent home. They built for them barrabkies, or dug-outs, clothed and fed them and instructed them in the religion of the Russian church. But their condition was deplorable enough when the American company was given possession of the islands. They were practically in a state of slavery. Transported without their consent, they were paid mere nominal wages, housed in wretched hovels and treated more like animals than human beings, except that they were required to attend the services of the Russian church and to contribute of their meagre wages to its support.

With the change from Russian to American occupation of the islands the condition of the natives was greatly improved. Good frame houses were built for them by the Alaska Commercial company, the price paid for removing the skins was raised from 10 to 40 cents a pelt—it is now 50 cents—a school was established which the children were required to attend, the sale of intoxicating liquors in the islands was stopped, a hospital and medical attendance were provided, and the condition of the natives on the seal islands is the envy of the natives of the other islands. The influence of the Russian church has been against the education of the children, especially in English, so that not much has been accomplished in that direction. There are only 180 natives on the islands now, the greater number being residents of St. Paul Island, where the seal catch for 1903 approximated 19,000 skins, while at St. George Island the company took only about 3,000, making 22,000 as the total season's crop on both islands.

The killing is always done early in the morning when the temperature is lowest. It was 5 o'clock in the morning when we left the ship. The village stands back nearly a mile from the shore where we landed, and with its rows of white cottages for the natives, the white residence and office buildings of the company and its storehouses, and the white walls and yellow and blue domes of the Greek church, presents, on the green hillside, quite an attractive appearance. The killing season was practically over, but the agents had arranged for a drive for our benefit. The seals lie along the rocky shores, the bulls

or beachmasters, as they are called, and the cows and their pups occupying the rocks nearest the water, while the bachelors, the young, unmated males, are forced to go farther back on the hillside. As the bachelors only are killed for their skins, this natural division facilitates the work of the drivers in making their selections. Very early in the morning two or three drivers slip in quietly between the bachelors and the shore and "cut out," as the cowboys would say, a bunch for the day's killing. They then proceed to make a great noise by shouting, slapping pieces of board together and by beating on tin cans. The seals are frightened and the squirming, hobbling, huddling mass is gradually forced away from the rookery or rocky shore to the grassy upland.

And here they come, bleating like a flock of sheep, ambling along in their awkward fashion through the tall grass. The younger males, and a few females which the drivers will not try to separate from the herd till the killing ground is reached, offer no resistance, but two or three old bulls gathered up with the younger males, but not intended for the slaughter, show fight and rush at the drivers with surprising speed and agility for a rod or two when pressed too hard. Nature never intended these animals to go more than a few rods from the shore, and though their movements in the water are all that the word grace can describe, their movements on land are clumsy and laborious. As they are driven to the killing ground their gait is a sort of canter, as they raise themselves on their flippers and then pull their heavy bodies



Killing Seal on St. Paul Island

up. They repeat this movement rapidly for a hundred yards and then fall, panting and exhausted. They become so heated in a drive of 200 rods that a cloud of steam rises from the clustered, squirming mass and they must be allowed to cool off before the killing begins or their pelts will spoil.

The killing ground is strewn with the rotting carcasses of thousands of seals which have been slaughtered there during the season and the stench is almost unbearable to those not accustomed to it. The natives and the agents themselves seem not to be disturbed by it and, after the seals have been allowed to rest and cool off for twenty minutes, the killing commences.

Since milady must have the furs which these pretty creatures wear, and since her wants cannot be satisfied without killing the seals, the method of killing adopted on the islands probably inflicts less suffering on the part of the victims than any other that could be devised. But one who has witnessed the operation once will not wish to see it again.

Here come the killers, three gangs of them, natives who are expert at the business. The first are half a dozen men, each armed with a mamlika or stout club, about five feet long and about three inches thick at the heavy end. They cut out a bunch of twenty or thirty of the frightened, huddling, struggling creatures and, striking each one on the head, crush the soft, thin skull. Death is instantaneous. As the club falls with a thud upon each graceful head those that have escaped the first crushing blows



Taking Seal Pelts on the Killing Grounds

seem to become conscious of their impending fate, and their appealing eyes, soft as those of a deer, their plaintive cries and their frantic but ineffectual struggles to escape would certainly stay the arm of any one not schooled by years and generations to do this cruel work. The stranger to this scene is forced to turn away, though he must admit that the slayers are skilful and that not a throb of conscious pain follows the descent of the heavy club. After the killers come three or four men with big knives, who open the pelts down the under side of the body and probe the hearts with their long blades. The third squad are six or eight experts who remove the pelts, and who wield their knives so dextrously that within thirty seconds in some cases the soft pelt is stripped clean and thrown fur side up on the wet grass. In the earlier part of the killing season which now lasts only about six weeks, in July and August, the carcasses are left to rot on the killing grounds, but in the latter part of the season considerable quantities of seal meat are saved for consumption by the natives. Seal oil is also made for the use of the natives and to some extent for commercial purposes, but it is not now an important part of the business.

The pelt of the seal, as it lies on the killing ground, bears no resemblance to the glossy, dark-brown coat which is such a popular winter garment here at home. It is about 3 feet long by 2 or 2 1-2 feet wide, on the average, has a grey, neutral tint from the long hairs that project beyond the fur, and has little of the beauty of the finished product as it comes plucked and dyed from the



A Section of a Seal Rookery on St. Paul Island



hands of the London furrier. It is provided in the contract that only the males two years old and upwards may be killed on the islands, and out of this drive twenty or thirty young females and three or four old bulls, whose fur is too coarse for the market, were allowed to escape and find their way back to the rookery. The agents of the Government are on hand at every killing to see that no females are killed, although that sometimes happens, as our party could testify.

From the killing ground the skins are taken to the salt-house, where they are laid together in pairs, the flesh side in, with a sprinkling of coarse salt between. After remaining there for two or three weeks, the skins are tied up in pairs in compact bundles and are ready for market. The sealskin market is still in London, where the best process of tanning and drying has been a well-guarded monopoly for many years, though the method of treatment is now understood in this country and would doubtless become an important industry if the seals were not being gradually exterminated, not by the company having the lease of the islands, but by the poachers at sea.

The first year after the islands were discovered, two million seal pelts were taken. The market was glutted and the price fell to the equivalent of $1 for a skin. Indiscriminate slaughter nearly exterminated the seals and the Russian Government had to regulate the sealing business. A Russian company was given the exclusive privilege of taking sealskins on the islands. When the United States came into possession of the islands, in 1867, and granted

an exclusive sealing privilege on the islands, commencing 1870, it was provided that not more than 100,000 skins should be taken in one year. That number has rarely been reached as an annual catch. The chief cause of the decline in the number of seals on the rookeries—hundreds now where there used to be thousands—was pelagic sealing. Pelagic sealing is taking the seals at sea, and it is particularly destructive because the poacher cannot tell whether he is killing males or females, and, as a matter of fact, does not care. The habits of these animals are very interesting. Where they come from in the spring or early summer, and where they go to in the autumn, is something of a mystery—the South Pacific probably, but they seem never to land anywhere—those which frequent the rookeries of the extreme South Pacific Ocean probably never finding their way north of the middle Pacific. As the sea is their natural habitat, and furnishes both food and lodging, they probably do not touch land from the time they leave it in the fall till they return again in the early summer.

The first to arrive on the seal islands as soon as the ice is gone are the older males, who come to select the sites of their summer residence. They locate, but not without a good deal of fighting over the choice spots, and await the arrival of the females, whom they gather in harems of half a dozen to fifteen or twenty as fast as they arrive. The young are born soon after the females arrive, one to each female.

Somebody, the Russians or the natives, is responsible

for a very peculiar seal nomenclature. The mated male is called a bull, or in the island vernacular, a "sicatch"; the unmated male, who is younger, is called a bachelor, or "holluschikie"; the female is called a cow, and her offspring a pup, though the latter is the only seal that bears any resemblance to bulls or cows or pups. The baby seal looks very much like a little black pup as he lies curled up asleep among the rocks; but when he cries he makes a noise a good deal like the bleat of a lamb. They look as much alike as a handful of peas, and a cluster of them is called a pod. The breeding grounds are called rookeries, though they are only the black, rocky shores of the islands, with nothing about them to suggest the usual significance of the term.

A few days after the pup is born his mother goes to sea for food. Her first excursion is not long, and when she returns she has no difficulty in picking out her own among the thousands of little, wriggling, crying and hungry creatures that crawl and tumble over the rocks made smooth and slippery by ages of travel over them by generations of seals. The later trips of the mother seal are longer as the food supply is becoming scarce near the islands, where there are so many thousands to be fed on fish, and her necessities may take her a hundred or more miles from the islands. It is when the females are on these excursions for food that the seal poachers reap their harvest. While the seal fishers of other nations cannot come upon the islands and take the seals there, they can hover around outside the three-mile limit and catch the

females in large numbers. The death of the female means also the death of her pup on the island, as there are no nurses in fur-sealdom and no seal mother will minister to the hunger of any seal baby but her own. The seals caught at sea during the summer are almost all females because the mated males never leave the rookeries from the time they arrive in the early part of June till they depart in September. These old Mormons of the sea are exceedingly jealous lords and will not leave their rocky reserves till the time comes for the whole seal pack to depart for warmer climes. Talk about the fast cure—these old fellows, who arrive fat and sleek in the beginning of the season, do not get a mouthful to eat during their summer-long residence on the islands and depart in the fall, lean and hungry.

They stand guard day and night growling and snarling, at every disturbance of their domestic circles, and exposing savage teeth that could tear and lacerate fearfully on opportunity. The visitor is abundantly warned to keep at a respectful distance, not less than forty or fifty feet. Closer intrusion is likely to provoke a charge by the old beachmaster, and the speed which he can develop when enraged is surprising. The battles which are sometimes fought between rivals on the rookeries are described as terribly fierce and lasting usually till one old warrior or the other is completely disabled. The rules of the rookery provide for a fair fight—there is no outside interference when two "sicatch" become involved in a personal altercation over the affections of some little fawn-

eyed beauty of the beach; and such badges of conflict as some of these veterans of many duels wear, would be a source of swelling pride to a German student.

Pelagic sealing, or sea poaching, threatened the destruction of the seal fisheries at an early date. Some of the poachers were Americans and more of them Canadians. Our Government undertook to patrol the waters of Bering Sea as an inland water, and claim exclusive property in the seals. Vessels belonging to other nations were seized and an attempt was made to put a stop to the pelagic sealing in Bering Sea. Other nations denied our claims, and after considerable friction had been engendered between our Government and Canada, Great Britain and the United States submitted the matter to what was known as the Paris Tribunal. That board of arbitration denied our claim to exclusive seal-fishing rights in Bering Sea, but established a sixty-mile limit within which the fisheries of neither nation might take seals. This regulation is enforced against the ships of both nations by patrol boats of both nations, one or the other being on duty all the time, and is sufficient to prevent poaching by ships of either nation party to this arbitration; but no other nations concede that they are bound by this regulation of no sealing within a radius of sixty miles. Japanese vessels, for example, do not hesitate to invade this zone. There is evidence to show, too, that British and, possibly, American seal fishers have resorted to the protection of the Japanese flag in order to get within less than sixty miles of the islands.

The mate of the Healy, the boat which carried our senatorial party down the lower Yukon to St. Michael, was at one time engaged in pelagic sealing, and his description of this really exciting sport interested me. Albert Edwards was on Bering Sea as a hunter for a Canadian sealing ship in 1893, the year the arbitration tribunal met in Paris. It was the custom, he said, for a sealing ship to carry eight or ten small boats, in each of which they sent out a hunter and two oarsmen to search for and capture seals wherever they could be found on the sea. The hunter is armed with a gun loaded with buckshot. He stands in the prow of the boat and carefully scans the sea for sleeping seal. The seal is a sleepy-head. His appetite satisfied after a good morning's fishing, he curls up on his back, folds his flippers across his breast and snores so loudly sometimes that he can be heard for several rods. When what is supposed to be good seal-fishing ground is reached, the vessel stops and anchors if possible. The boats work out to windward. Every precaution is necessary, as the seal seems to be able to smell the hunters half a mile off when the wind is right. The small boats move on quietly, more careful to avoid exposing themselves through the animal's sense of smell than through his sense of hearing. It takes a practised and keen eye to discover the seal among the waves, and a lot of careful manœuvring to get within range. A successful shot, and the floating prey of the marksman is pulled into the boat, skinned and the carcass thrown overboard and the search begins again. The hunters were paid

$1.50 for each skin when seals were comparatively plenty and the market price was low, but as the price advanced from $9 or $10 to $20 or $22, as it is now, the hunters demanded and secured $5 apiece for all the skins they brought in. In their search for seal the small boats often wandered miles away from their ship and before going out of sight, as they sometimes did, took their bearings by the compass to insure safe return. The insurance was not always good, however, and many small-boat crews have chased the seal too far. Edwards relates that he was once lost on Bering Sea for over a week and the revenue cutter McCulloch on its way up to St. Michael to meet our party picked up a boat containing a hunter and two oarsmen who were lost from a Japanese seal poacher and had been drifting about several days.

The North American Commercial company, which holds from the Government the exclusive sealing privilege on Pribylov Islands, is not enjoying a very profitable monopoly at the present time. The seal herds have been so depleted that a catch of 20,000 is difficult to get and the annual product of the islands is diminishing. The annual rental payable to the Government was fixed at $60,000, but that contemplated a catch approximating 100,000 skins. This rental has been scaled down to $12,000, but the fixed charges of over $10 a pelt, including a tax of $9.62, do not leave a very large margin of profit. While the industry is now nearly extinct, owing chiefly to the ravages of the poachers, who take more pelts now than the leasing company, a suspension of the

killing for a few years would soon restore the rookeries to their once populous state. In 1834 the Russian sealers had reduced the number on the rookeries to 8,000 seals. Seal-fishing was suspended for thirty-three years and poaching prohibited by the Russian Government, which then claimed the right to control Bering Sea, and in 1867, when the United States came into possession of the islands, the herd had increased to upwards of 4,000,000.

IX

THE ALASKAN FISHERIES

AT some time in the history of the world, while the earth was being prepared for human habitation, volcanic action appears to have lifted a ridge in the earth's crust above the waters of the sea till it appeared in almost continuous line from the southwest coast of Alaska to the Asiatic shore. How near Bering Sea came to being a bay of the Arctic Ocean and cut off from the Pacific probably not every one realises.

Beginning with the Alaskan peninsula, which juts out between the Pacific and Bering Sea for nearly 500 miles, the volcanic ridge fails to reach the surface continuously, but appears at frequent intervals, for a thousand miles further, in what is known as the Aleutian chain of islands.

It may not be generally appreciated that Nome and the seal islands are farther west than Honolulu, that Attu, the most western of the Aleutian chain, is not as far from the Asiatic coast as is St. Louis from Minneapolis and that it is nearer from Attu to the Kommander Islands, just off the coast of Kamschatka, than from Minneapolis to Milwaukee. This Alaskan peninsula and the Aleutian Islands, if stretched out across our continent, would reach from Minneapolis to Boston. Such comparisons may help to

convey a clearer idea of the far western reach of our Alaskan possessions.

One of the largest of the Aleutian chain is the island of Unalaska, lying in practically the same longitude with



Unalaska

the Hawaiian Islands. Shut within the heart of this island is one of the finest harbours in the world. Entered by a somewhat circuitous route from the north side of the island, this harbour is completely surrounded by high mountains and affords a safe refuge for ships of the heaviest draft; where they may load and unload at commodious wharves, no matter what storms may rage without on the open sea. This harbour, as well as the water

all along the Aleutian chain, is open all the year round. The Japan current, a warm ocean stream, flows eastward along and around these islands, so that while their volcanic mountain summits are covered with perpetual snow the lower slopes and valleys are beautiful from April to November in their covering of grass and moss and great variety of wild flowers. A noticeable peculiarity is the absence of trees. The soft, velvet-looking surface is green and beautiful and the combination of snowy peaks, some of them smoking with internal fires, the soft green of the hills and valleys, and dark waters of the ocean, makes a picture of which the eye never tires. The climate is mild, the mean winter temperature being about thirty degrees above zero and the average for midsummer only twenty degrees higher. There is a great deal of rain and snow and fog.

Unalaska, on account of its excellent harbour, was made a base of operations by the Russians from the early days of their occupation of the northwest American coast. It was an important point in the fur-trading business a hundred years ago and more, when the fox and that most valuable of fur-bearing animals, the sea otter, were taken in large numbers, to the practical extinction of the latter.

To this island of Unalaska the senatorial party came on the morning of August 5, and dropped anchor in the bay twenty-four hours after leaving the seal islands. There are two settlements on this harbour, the one of most commercial importance being known as Dutch Har-



Pacific Squadron in Dutch Harbour

bour, where large docks have been erected and where are the offices and storehouses of one of the Alaskan commercial companies. Farther inland lies the old Russian village of Unalaska or Iliuliuk, which means curving beach. Dutch Harbour is important as a coaling station, and when we arrived we found there the North Pacific fleet, consisting of the flagship New York, the Concord, the Bennington, the Marblehead, and the Fortune, with Admiral Glass in command. The revenue cutter Bear was also in the harbour, and soon after our arrival the revenue cutter Rush, bound for St. Michael and Nome, came in. The Bear was awaiting the return of the British ship Shearwater from the seal islands, with which vessel the Bear alternates in guarding the sixty-mile limit around those islands, and the islands themselves, from poachers. The Shearwater arrived before our departure, so that the harbour looked somewhat as if a naval review were about to take place.

Admiral Glass and the officers of his fleet had just arrived from a trip westward along the Aleutian chain, where they had been engaged for several weeks in exploring and surveying the harbours and coast lines, making soundings and picking out the most available places for one or two naval coaling stations, which are sure to be of importance in our naval operations on the Pacific.

The village of Unalaska is the objective of many tourists as the best place in which to buy specimens of the wonderful basket-weaving done by the Aleuts. Thither, for sale, are brought, by an old German, who is a sort of

self-constituted chief of the island, baskets and other articles from far-off Attu, the most westerly of the Aleutian chain. In all the basketry of the native races of our western mainland and island possessions nothing compares favourably with the Attu baskets, while for fineness and delicacy of construction the weaving of some of the smaller articles made by the Attu natives out of wild grass and root fibres, compares favourably with costly laces. The population of Unalaska is chiefly Indian or Creole.

Above the cluster of white cottages and stores that front the curving beach which gives to the place its Indian name of Iliuliuk, rise the towers and dome of the Greek church. The site of this lingering vestige of Russian occupation is one of the fairest spots in all Alaska. I saw it first in the evening of a beautiful day. High overhead tower the heights of old Makushin, from whose summit floats lazily a cloud of white, steamy smoke like the waste from the tall chimney of a great factory while the workers rest and the fires are banked. The mountains rise along the west and are silhouetted sharply against the glowing sunset sky. The grey fog gathers in the valleys and follows the receding sunlight slowly up the hillsides. At the upper end of the village the waters of the bay are contracted to a narrow channel, but a little further on they spread out again and fill the deep valley in the heart of the island. Through the mists of evening which float along the surface of this placid water glides the kiak of a native propelled by his silent stroke. As one rests upon

the grassy hillside across the channel to gather in the beauty of the scene held here in this far-away island of the Pacific, the air carries absolutely no sound. Dutch Harbour has kindly taken away all the prose and left to dreamy Unalaska only the poetry of existence. No ships lie at her deserted wharves; the days of her commercial importance are gone. And this is true of practically all the places of importance under Russian rule. Unalaska is no longer of consequence in the development of Alaska; Kodiak or St. Paul, at one time the centre of things Russian on the American continent, retains much to interest the visitor in the way of reminders of its one-time importance, but they are all glories of the past; Sitka, which after St. Paul became the seat of the Russian government of Alaska and which really achieved the distinction of being at one time the most important commercial and industrial centre on the Pacific coast of North America, is only a beautiful, a very beautiful, reminiscence and cuts little figure in the commercial or political Alaska of today.

From Unalaska our route lay along the south coast of the Alaskan peninsula. The Aleutian Islands swing down to the 51st parallel of latitude, only about 3 degrees above Seattle, but now we turn northeast and before we reach home find ourselves at Valdez, upon the latitude of White Horse Rapids on the 61st parallel. The North Pacific does not always live up to its name, and withal, revenue cruisers built for speed are not by any means the steadiest boats on a rolling sea. I am violating no con-



Kodiak, or St. Paul, on Kadiak Island

fidences committed to me and making no confessions, but neither the seal steaks and livers brought from St. Paul Island nor the codfish taken Sunday morning on a cod bank off the Semidi Islands appealed very strongly to any number of the party. They say the table was not set that day in the captain's cabin where the senators were quartered, and the racks on the table down in the wardroom were not filled with the dishes of many except the officers, and one or two of them seemed to be dieting.

Time was when the fur trade was the chief source of Alaska's wealth. But that declined. Then gold began to be discovered and gold mining absorbed all attention directed toward Alaska, and it is destined to be much more important than it is now. But unless you are much better informed with regard to Alaskan affairs than I was before I went there, you may not be prepared for the fact that the fisheries of Alaska employ more capital, and that their annual product amounts to as much, and sometimes half as much again, as the gold output.

The salmon fisheries of the Columbia and Fraser rivers and of Puget Sound are well known and generally regarded as the principal source of the salmon supply, but the fact is that the whole coast line of British Columbia, of southeastern and southern Alaska and clear around to the Yukon River is more or less plentifully stocked with these most nutritious of all food fishes, the king, the red and other varieties of salmon. Wherever there are streams running from inland snow-fed lakes into the sea, on the islands as well as on the mainland, the salmon congregate

at the breeding time and sometimes literally choke the mouths of the fresh-water courses on their way to the spawning grounds.

It was on the morning of August 10 that the McCulloch dropped anchor off the mouth of Karluk River on the north shore of Kadiak Island, in a fog so dense that it was impossible to see a ship's length. The fog whistle was answered by the ringing of the bells and the shrill whistles of small steam craft, and as the fog lifted a few minutes later it revealed the large buildings of the Alaska Packing association at what has been heretofore the largest salmon-packing station in Alaska.

The seines had been set about the mouth of Karluk River in the early morning, and when we went ashore after an early breakfast we found the fishermen drawing in their nets. Where salmon fishing is done on a large scale, as it is at Karluk, most of the fish are taken in seines. A net, nine or ten feet wide, and two or three thousand feet long, is loaded on a scow, towed by a steam tug. The tug makes a circuit out from the shore enclosing a large area opposite the mouth of Karluk River, paying out the seine as it goes and returning to the shore, ten or fifteen rods from the point from which it started out. One end of the seine is made fast while the other is attached to a steam windlass and drawn slowly to shore. As it is brought in it is attended by fishermen in boats to see that it does not become entangled on the rocks and broken, and when it has been drawn in so as to narrow the enclosed area to a surface of two or three

hundred square feet, large fishing boats are brought alongside and the salmon are dipped up with huge baskets into the boats.

The draught which was loaded that morning into the fishing boats was a good one for a season which had not been particularly satisfactory. The number taken out of that net was variously estimated from 12,000 to 17,000. And what a wriggling, squirming, slippery mass, as they fill three square-built boats 8 feet wide and 18 feet long to a depth of 2 feet! The fish in this draught are of average size, 15 to 24 inches long.

The loaded boats are taken to the cannery, where the fish are emptied into large bins convenient to the machinery employed in canning. The first process, of course, is the cleaning, and this is nearly all done by machinery. As the fish are brought on carriers from the bin they are deposited on tables where men called "butchers" rapidly and skilfully cut off the heads, fins and tails. A good "butcher" can handle 250 to 300 salmon an hour. They pass from this table on belt carriers to a machine which treats the fish a good deal as a corn-sheller treats the corn-cob, except that it not only removes the scales, but cuts the fish open and removes the entrails. A strong stream of water is thrown upon the fish in this process so as to wash it out thoroughly, but to make sure of a clean job, and that no fish unfit for market are packed, the fish go next to the hands of cleaners, who inspect them and finish them up ready for the cutting machine.

From the cleaner they are carried to machines where



Drawing in the Net at Karluk

the fish is laid crosswise on an ascending belt, or a series of parallel belts, travelling side by side. Between these belts knives revolve rapidly, and as the fish are carried up on the belts they are cut in sections the length of the cans in which they are packed. They come from the cutting machine to another ingenious contrivance which carries the cans one at a time to a point opposite a rammer, which forces the fish into the can in sufficient quantity to fill it at one stroke, after which the lid is placed in position by machinery and the head end of the can rolled through molten solder in such a way as to seal it. All this process of cutting the fish, filling the can, putting on the cap and soldering it is done by machinery at the rate of 50 to 60 cans a minute.

The fish are packed raw. The cans are placed in large steam cooking tanks, where they are heated to a temperature of 212 degrees. Here they remain for forty-five minutes to an hour. When they are taken out, each can is punctured with a small pricking mallet, to allow the gases and steam generated in the first cooking process to escape. The aperture is then soldered up and the cans are returned to another set of ovens or steam tanks, where they are subjected to a heat of 240 degrees for another hour. After this second cooking process they are set out and allowed to cool. They are then rinsed clean with cold water and are subjected to the final test as to whether they have been securely sealed or not. This is determined by tapping each can on the end with a little bar of iron. The Confucian who does this (the cannery employés are

mainly Chinese) has become so expert that he can tell by the sound whether the can is perfectly sealed or not. If it is not air-tight it is set aside and the leak found and closed up. A brilliant label is attached, the cans are packed in cases containing forty-eight cans to the case, and they are ready for the market. Before the cans are filled with the raw fish a measured amount of salt is deposited in each by a simple mechanical device which salts a whole trayful at one movement.

Every well-equipped salmon cannery in Alaska manufactures its own cans and makes the wooden boxes or cases in which the salmon are shipped to market.

The salmon appear around the outlets of fresh-water streams only during the summer season—through June, July and August. When the season approaches the canning companies of Alaska gather up in San Francisco, Seattle and other coast towns men who furnish the most profitable labour for this business. At Karluk the fishing is done largely by Italians. For the three months of the fishing season they receive on the average about $350, together with their board and lodging, and their transportation to and from the fishing grounds.

Not all the salmon are canned. There is a market for salted salmon, particularly in Japan and China, where the consumer is not as particular as to quality as the American or European customer. There are several varieties of salmon, the less desirable being known as the pink salmon and the humpback. These are salted, dried and packed in barrels for export. Dried salmon is the form also in

which the Indian prefers the large quantities which he consumes. The fish which he takes for his own use are cut open, boned and slashed into sections about an inch wide so as to open up the flesh and expose it to the air, and hung up to dry. After exposure in this way for a week or ten days it is smoked until nearly black and is ready for winter use. Dried salmon dipped in seal oil constitutes the principal part of the Alaska Indian's winter food and is esteemed as highly by him as is the beef roast by the beef-eating Englishman.

Very little is known about the history of the salmon. It is known that it is hatched in fresh water; that in the course of time it finds its way to the sea. But where it goes, and what has been its manner of life during the five or six years which are generally supposed to intervene before it returns to spawn in soft water, no one has yet been able to discover. But at the age of probably six or seven years both males and females swarm about the mouths of fresh-water streams, guided by an instinct which compels them to seek the sources of these fresh-water streams for their spawning grounds. As soon as the salmon leaves the salt water and enters the fresh it begins to deteriorate. The absence of the saline property seems to be fatal to his existence. The flesh begins to rot; the males particularly turn a purplish-red, with great splotches of grey on their backs and sides; their noses appear to be covered with a white fungous growth, which is only decomposition setting in, and unless they reach their destination within a reasonable time they die before the





South Alaska Indian in Kiak

spawning process. When they spawn the male digs a little depression in the sand with his nose and the eggs are deposited in it. But where thousands of salmon are spawning on the same gravel bed the same season the eggs first deposited are often disturbed, and it is estimated that not one in ten ever matures under natural conditions. The spawning salmon rarely if ever find their way back to salt water, but die in the fresh water to which they have come to lay their eggs. Wonderful stories are told of the feats performed by the salmon in ascending rapids and cascades in order to reach the headwaters where their instincts impel them to go. Where the volume of falling water is sufficient they are said to swim almost perpendicularly for several feet, while a leap of two or three feet over an obstruction is no trick at all for these powerful swimmers.

Although the law provides that salmon fishing must be suspended for thirty-six hours out of every week in order to give the fish a chance to go up to the spawning ground, where the canning companies are taking fish in large quantities at the mouths of the best streams, nature cannot be relied upon to provide for the perpetuation of the species and the Government has required by law that all canneries shall maintain hatcheries and put into fresh water every year ten fry, as the young fish are called, for every full-grown fish canned. Some of the hatcheries comply with this law and some do not. At Karluk there is a large hatchery, the establishment of which must have cost the Alaska Packing association

from $50,000 to $60,000, while the maintenance probably adds another $10,000 annually.

The salmon canneries of Alaska pay to the Government, annually, in the form of a tax of 4 cents on each case, about $90,000, and it is the judgment of the fish commission as well as the packers themselves that the fair and most effectual method of perpetuating the salmon is for the Government to establish hatcheries and maintain them out of the fund derived from this tax, or from a heavier one if necessary, as this tax amounts to only 1 per cent. on the value of the output. This would not only distribute the burden of maintenance equally upon all the packers, but it would insure the propagation of the fish by the most scientific methods and the perpetuation of the most valuable species. As to the necessity of artificial propagation, there can hardly be any doubt. So many ways are found to avoid the spirit while complying with the letter of the law with reference to the taking of the salmon that it cannot be hoped that this valuable natural asset will not be materially affected if the perpetuation of it is left to the processes of nature and the only half-observed requirements as to private hatcheries. The Government is giving serious attention to this phase of the matter and during the summer of 1903 sent out the Albatross, a ship equipped for the service of the fish commission, bearing a corps of fish experts for the purpose chiefly of investigating the condition of the salmon and other fisheries of the Alaskan coast.

The capital stock of the companies employed in pack-

ing salmon in Alaska is about $25,000,000, and the value of their plants $6,500,000. The pack for 1903 is estimated closely at 2,204,423 cases, valued at $8,500,000. The average annual product of the salmon fisheries exceeds the original first cost of Alaska by a million dollars, and the total product since Alaska became an American possession will exceed seven times the amount paid by Mr. Seward for the entire district.

Alaska has other valuable varieties of fish, which, however, have not yet been developed to proportions corresponding with the salmon industry. Halibut, one of the most delicately flavoured fish, is found all along the coast, but the principal fishing for this species is done in Wrangell Narrows, where the glacial ice is picked up as it floats by and used for packing the fish for the Eastern market. Cod are found over a large area and will eventually attract more attention than they do now. Herring, red snappers, flounders, black bass, many kinds of trout, greylings, eels, shrimps, crabs and clams, but no oysters, abound in Alaskan waters.

X

TRANSPORTATION—THE KEY TO ALASKA'S LOCKED-UP WEALTH

ALTHOUGH the traveller through Alaska cannot escape the evidences that he is on the far frontier; although the fact that the American occupation is recent, that the population is sparse and that we are just at the beginning of things in Alaska, is unavoidable, one is occasionally reminded of a prior occupation and is almost made to feel as if he were moving among the ruins of an extinct civilisation. Vestiges of the earlier occupation are encountered here and there, and add a peculiar zest to the pleasures which the traveller may derive from a journey over the long and sometimes lonesome paths that lead to the commercial centres and among the scenic attractions of that wonderful country.

It was its historic character and its importance in the period of the Russian occupation that excited our chief interest in old St. Paul, or Kodiak, as it is commonly known now, when the senatorial party arrived there on the morning of August 12, in the course of their long Alaskan tour. Kodiak is on the south shore of Kadiak Island. A singular inconsistency will be observed in the spelling of the name of the island and the name of the village

which custom now sanctions. But what terrible things the gutturals and the aspirates of the Russians and the natives have done for the place nomenclature of the Alaskan coast, is not even remotely suggested by this name, so comparatively smooth and pronounceable, notwithstanding its rough edges. Once the seat of authority in Russian America, Kodiak retains some of the evidences of its commercial and military importance of a hundred years ago. Among these relics of its past are its Greek church and the immense log warehouses, whose massive construction has withstood the lapse of years and promises to stand many decades more as a monument to the past.

Kodiak is one of the most attractive spots scenically on the south Alaskan coast, but is no longer of commercial importance, although, since the American occupation, it has been one of the most flourishing trading posts of the Alaska Commercial company. It was of interest to the senatorial committee chiefly because of the experiment now being made there in live-stock raising. Three years ago a company with headquarters in Seattle placed several hundred sheep on the island in the expectation that in this mild climate these animals could make their own way the year round without any attention. The experiment under those conditions was not altogether successful. There is an abundance of forage, but the island is cut by deep ravines in which there is a heavy growth of small shrubbery in which the sheep often become entangled unless they are attended; and the spring season is so wet



Columbia Glacier, Prince William Sound

and the air is so cold and damp that, left without shelter, the young lambs perished by the hundreds. The same people, however, not satisfied with their first experiment, brought to the island for their second trial 7,500 sheep and 500 head of cattle. It is their plan to provide shelter for the animals at the time the young are born, and with this reasonable provision the experiment seems likely to prove a success. It is not practicable, however, to turn loose either cattle or sheep on this island without attendance, as they wander over wide areas and cannot be rounded up as they can on the plains or even among the foothills in Montana. The animals are also exposed to the depredations of a particularly large and ferocious species of brown bear which inhabits the island in considerable numbers. There is reason to expect, however, that with proper care and at a moderate expense the extensive grass lands on the lower levels will sustain large herds of both sheep and cattle, and that the industry will be highly profitable.

On these islands off the coast of southwest Alaska a new and peculiar industry is found in the experimental stage. Fox-ranching is an effort to restore an important natural resource. At an expense of $1.50 a year for feed for one of these animals, skins are obtained from the blue and the silver-grey foxes valued at from $20 to $50. The skins are rare now and more valuable than the much-prized pelts of the fur seal. Some of the animals for stocking these ranches have been brought from far-off Attu at the extreme western end of the Aleutian chain.

Whether this unique industry is to be successful and how profitable it is likely to become have not yet been satisfactorily shown.

From Kodiak our course lay northeast 315 miles to Valdez, at the upper end of Prince William Sound. Valdez is the future great city of Alaska. Its name suggests the presence of the Spaniard. The Spaniards, becoming jealous of the spread of Russian domination in the North Pacific, sent an expedition up into these waters in 1790, which penetrated to the head of Prince William Sound and conferred upon the great glacier, upon the front of which the most ambitious town in Alaska now stands, the name which the sanguine inhabitants of the town think has something in it.

Prince William Sound penetrates the mainland for a distance of 75 miles and the ride up this grand estuary affords a view of the finest scenery on the whole Alaskan coast. Snow-capped mountains rise precipitously on either side from whose white summits unnumbered glaciers slide slowly and silently into the valleys between, while from beneath these immense fields of ice and snow beautiful cascades break down over the mountain fronts and leap from ledges into the sea like showers of molten silver. Only one glacier, the Columbian, delivers its frozen stream into the sea, but its cold and glittering front, white streaked with deep blue, rises like a solid wall straight across the valley through which it emerges from the mountain slopes behind. The air is moist with the constant melting of the snow, and even when the skies are cloud-

less, is filled with a soft, blue haze which adds an indescribable charm to the scene—a sort of Inness impressionist effect which the memory will recall with never-failing delight.

Valdez is a town of 1,000 inhabitants built on a moraine lying across the foot of a great glacier which comes down within four miles of the town. As one looks up toward that great field of ice now resting with its foot against the moraine, he can be pardoned if he should indulge in a moment's speculation as to what would happen if that big glacier should slip a cog some night and shove the moraine out into the harbour. You know what the boy philosopher said, that "just 'cause nothin' ain't ever got you 'tain't no sign nothin' ain't ever goin' to git you," but the people of Valdez aren't afraid. Their principal business just now is waiting for something to turn up and they go on working at it without any apprehension about the glacier. The something they are waiting for to turn up is a railroad. They have got there first and they are holding what they regard as the key to the situation—the most practicable and perhaps the only available open-all-the-year-round port from which a railroad can be built from the south coast of Alaska to the interior. Their hopes are centred upon the construction of a railroad from that point, northeast through the Copper River valley, across the valley of the Tanana, through the Forty-Mile district to Eagle on the Yukon. In 1899 the United States Government sent a military expedition into this country to explore and open a military trail which should be made a



Valdez

mail route from Valdez to Eagle. Over that route mail is carried weekly during the summer on pack horses.

Hon. John G. Brady, Governor of Alaska, when asked what Alaska needed most, replied: "The great essential to the development of Alaska is transportation." And this is the fact which impresses the student of Alaska's future more than anything else. He is especially impressed with this thought after having visited Yukon territory on the Canadian side, and having seen there what has been done by the Dominion Government for the development of its most northern possession by the construction of wagon roads. One of the most important branches of the organisation of that territory is the department of roads. The British Yukon is young compared with our district of Alaska. Prior to the discoveries on the Klondike in 1896 and 1897 there was practically no settlement and no development in that country. But during the last five or six years, according to Mr. S. A. D. Bertrand, territorial superintendent of public works and buildings, at Dawson, there has been expended in the Yukon territory $1,030,-118 in the building of wagon roads. This represents the first cost of 875 miles of roads and winter trails, one-fourth of which is graded and surfaced wagon roads on which heavy loads may be drawn by teams of from two to ten or twelve horses and over which it is possible now to move heavy mining machinery at any time of the year as easily as it could be drawn over the roads of central New York.

When the senatorial committee, while in Dawson, were

invited by United States Consul McGowan and General Manager Washburn of the Northern Commercial company to visit the mines on Bonanza and Eldorado creeks, one important end to be accomplished by that trip was to show to the senators what the Yukon territory, by the aid of the Dominion Government, had done for the development of the country in building roads and cheapening transportation through the mining districts. The drive of 35 or 40 miles was made in stages drawn by 4 horses and carrying 12 passengers to the wagon. There is no place in Alaska where this performance could have been repeated. The method pursued in the Yukon is briefly this: The territorial government determines where roads shall be built and makes an estimate of the cost. This estimate is presented to the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa and an appropriation is made for the purpose. They do not wait in the British Yukon until all the burden of settlement has been borne by the people at the great expense which the absence of passable roads implies, but whenever a discovery is made which promises to be of importance and gives evidence of permanence, engineers are sent out to survey a route for a wagon road, and men are put at work at once on its construction. The result is that the great mining district known as the Klondike is covered with a network of excellent roads reaching back from the Yukon for a distance of sixty miles. Originally conditions here were substantially those which obtain in Alaska to-day so far as transportation is concerned.

A member of a firm engaged in freighting over these

roads from Dawson is authority for the statement that in 1898, prior to the construction of these roads, freighting by pack horses for a distance of 15 to 25 miles was done at the rate of 15 cents a pound, or $300 a ton. Now the same freight is transported 25 to 50 miles for a cent a pound or less in ton lots, and in smaller quantities for a cent and a half a pound. This firm runs stages 290 miles a day over these various routes and daily transportation may be had for passengers and freight between Dawson and all points in the Klondike region.

It is the estimate of this firm that the cost of living in the Klondike camps, taking all things into account, but crediting the reduction chiefly to good roads, has been reduced to one-fourth what it was five years ago before these roads were built. What this means to the development of the country can scarcely be overstated. Compare, for instance, the cost of living where freights for supplies for a distance of 20 to 40 miles ranges from a cent to a cent and a half a pound, with the conditions described by Consul McGowan on Chicken Creek, 100 miles away, on the American side. Freights from Seattle to Eagle, which is as near to Chicken Creek as is Dawson, are substantially the same as to Dawson, but there are no roads of any kind between Eagle on the American side and the important mining camps in the Forty-Mile district, of which Chicken Creek is a part. And while only a cent to a cent and a half a pound must be added for freight charges from Dawson to camps forty miles away in the Klondike, the contrast between Dawson prices and Chicken Creek prices





It Snows in Valdez

shows what the wagon roads have done for the miner on the British side.

For instance, in the spring of 1902 when flour was $7 a hundred at Dawson, it was $32 a hundred on Chicken Creek. Hams and bacon, when 25 cents a pound in Dawson, cost 50 cents on Chicken Creek; condensed cream $10 a case in Dawson, $22 on Chicken Creek; potatoes 6 1-2 cents a pound in Dawson, 25 cents on Chicken Creek; onions 12 1-2 cents a pound in Dawson, 30 to 32 cents on Chicken Creek; beef in carcass, 75 cents a pound; eggs, $35 a case in summer. On all canned goods there was an advance of 65 per cent. on Dawson prices at Chicken Creek and this difference is chargeable chiefly to the cost of freighting the last 100 miles. The trade of this entire Forty-Mile district should be handled from Eagle, on the American side, but it is practically monopolised from Dawson by the aid of a wagon road built from Dawson westward to the boundary line. Dawson would have wagon roads all through the Forty-Mile district if it were all on British territory.

But the Forty-Mile district does not by any means present the worst conditions with respect to transportation. Here is a list of prices for supplies in the region of Copper Centre, about seventy-five miles inland from Valdez. All supplies must be carried over the military trail on pack horses, and a Minneapolis man who has recently visited that section reports the following scale of prices: Hay, $600 a ton; oats, 35 cents a pound; flour, 35 cents a pound; potatoes, $11.20 a bushel; butter, $1 a pound;

roast beef, in cans, $1.25 a pound; condensed milk, 75 cents a package; ham and bacon, 65 cents a pound; rice, 40 cents a pound; baking powder, $1 a can; pepper, $1 a can; soap, 50 cents a cake; dried fruit, 60 cents a pound; tomatoes and corn, $1 a can; oil, $3.50 a gallon; window glass, 10 x 12, $1.50 a pane; horseshoes, $2.50 apiece; tin pails, $2.50; coffee pot, $2.50; wash tub, $8; hand saw, $12; a joint of stove pipe, $1.

It should be understood, too, that transportation to Valdez, the point of departure from the coast, is cheap, and that prices are not exorbitant there. In fact, the advance over Seattle prices at Alaska coast points is very moderate. It is this item of transportation from the coast to the interior which makes living there so expensive, and, indeed, prohibitive, unless the miner is working in rich gravel and taking out large returns for his labour every day.

Another illustration is furnished by Judge D. A. McKenzie, United States commissioner at Coldfoot on the Koyukuk. The Koyukuk is navigated by small boats a distance of 600 miles north from the Yukon River and Coldfoot is one of the most northern settlements in Alaska. There are, however, about 400 whites in that region engaged in mining. Freight from Seattle or San Francisco must go up by Dutch Harbour, north to St. Michael, and up the Yukon and the Koyukuk, and the rate is over $300 a ton. When it gets to Coldfoot it must be distributed back on the creeks among the miners at an added expense of 15 to 20 cents a pound, making the total

charge for transportation reach the rate of about $600 a ton. Of course, no country can be occupied where the expense of living is so great that does not produce liberally in gold. Some claims in that section pay from $115 to $125 per man for ten hours' work, and large quantities of low-grade gravel are handled at from $15 to $20 per man per day.

Such facts as these explain better than anything else the retarded development of Alaska and the more rapid and advanced development on the British side. Hundreds of claims are worked on the British side at a moderate profit which could not be worked at all if the expense of living there were as great as on the American side. There is nothing in the natural conditions, however, which should give greater impetus to the mining development on the British side than on the American. On the contrary, aside from a few rich claims in the Klondike which can be easily matched on the Seward Peninsula, the attractions for the miner on the American side in such districts as Fairbanks, Forty-Mile, the Upper Koyukuk, the American Creek, Nome and Council City districts, and probably others, are just as great as on the British side. In fact, outside the Klondike region itself the British Yukon has nothing as yet to offer equal to any of the districts named on the American side.

As is generally understood, the ocean front of Alaska from Portland Channel to Cook's Inlet, west of Valdez, is mountainous. The coast range throughout that entire distance of 1,200 or 1,500 miles, is high and rugged and



Solomon Rapids, near Valdez

difficult of penetration. The White Pass road, however, has surmounted the difficulties of railroad passage through the mountain barrier and government surveys and private explorations have found a route on American territory through Keystone Canyon and over what is known as Thompson's Pass, northeast of Valdez, over which it is said to be entirely practicable to build and operate a railroad. The testimony is practically unanimous on this point, including that of Senator Nelson, who while our party halted at Valdez, in company with Lieutenant Barker and Assistant Engineer McMillan, of the McCulloch, rode on horseback twenty-five miles up the Government trail to Thompson's Pass. Once over the range no serious difficulties present themselves in crossing the Copper River valley or the valley of the Tanana, and the entire feasibility of building a railroad from Valdez to Eagle, so far as the engineering problems are concerned, is not seriously disputed. The route seems to present no greater difficulties than have been overcome by many of the engineering achievements on American and Canadian roads. Indeed, the engineering difficulties are pronounced by Lieutenant Abercrombie, who laid out the military trail from Valdez to Eagle, to be comparatively trifling. The elevation of Thompson's Pass is about 1,000 feet less than White Pass crossed by the White Pass & Yukon Railway. The only question is one of financial feasibility. Capital cannot be easily induced to engage in enterprises of this kind without reasonable expectation of profitable return. However, a company has been organised to build

over this route, encouraged, no doubt, by the fact that the White Pass & Yukon Railway, operated in connection with its steamboat line to Dawson, has been a great financial success, the original investment having been cleared up, it is stated, from the earnings of the first three years. This projected road, known as the Valdez & Yukon Railway, has been incorporated under the laws of Virginia with a capital of $10,000,000. When it will be built depends upon peculiar conditions. While there is considerable gold in the Copper River country, more in the Tanana valley, and still more in the Forty-Mile country toward Eagle, the greatest known mineral wealth along that route is believed to be the copper deposits of the Copper River country. During the summer of 1903 three or four prospecting parties, each representing different important copper interests in this country and Mexico, visited the valley of the Copper River and its tributaries to ascertain the truth of the reports of great copper deposits there. These explorers were very reticent as to the value of the copper deposits supposed to exist in that region. One of them, however, stated to a reliable citizen of Valdez, known personally to the writer, that when the copper deposits of the Copper River country began to be developed and put upon the market the mines of Butte and the Calumet and Hecla would have to go out of business; that copper could be produced from the Alaska ores at a third or a fourth of the expense incurred in either of the localities named. No copper interest, however, seems prepared to commence operations, influenced possibly by

the fact that to do so would be to lessen if not destroy the value of the properties already in operation in the States, where large sums are already invested. These copper kings appear to be watching each other, however, each to see that the others do not get the start of him. This country has been protected more or less, and the best known deposits have been filed upon and are claimed by individuals who have set a high price upon their holdings. Some day, however, these rich deposits of copper will fall into the hands of men of capital and will be developed; but until they do pass into the hands of men of large means capable of developing them, the construction of the Valdez and Eagle railroad through that copper region is likely to be deferred. Whoever builds the road, and it will doubtless be built some day, will first have to obtain control of the best copper deposits, in the development of which such a railroad would be almost indispensable.*

Among the inducements to build such a railroad, I have referred only to the mineral wealth of the region to be traversed. All the testimony obtainable from residents, prospectors, military explorers, builders of the Government telegraph lines, mail-carriers, agents of the agricultural department and others best acquainted with the coun-

* The recent discoveries on the Tanana and the marvellous growth of the great gold camp at Fairbanks constitute another reason why this projected road should be built, for, while Fairbanks is considerably west of the point where the Eagle City trail crosses the Tanana, it would doubtless become the objective of a branch if not of the main line. If Fairbanks proves to be a permanent camp, it ought to add considerably to the inducements to build the Valdez and Eagle City railroad.

try, is to the effect that there are large areas in the Tanana and Copper River valleys adapted to successful agriculture and stock-raising and that when transportation facilities have been provided hundreds of thousands of acres of rich soil will come into use, and furnish large traffic to a railroad.

Ex-Governor Leedy, of Kansas, who had just returned from the Copper River valley, said to the senatorial committee at Valdez, that he had been obliged to pay thirty-five cents a pound for oats for his horse right on ground that would produce that article as well as Illinois or Ohio. The Government tests seem to show that beyond question this portion of Alaska will produce forage for animals in great abundance. But the agricultural possibilities of Alaska is another story.

The Government is not likely to subsidise any railroad in Alaska. Land grants in countries whose chief known resources are minerals are not very practicable and a cash or bond subsidy is not now a popular idea.

What the Government is more likely to do and ought to undertake without unnecessary delay is the building of a wagon road over the route proposed for the railroad, with branches leading to adjacent mining camps. Such a road would greatly stimulate the development of the country and in that way hasten the building of a railroad.

The history of things at White Pass illustrates this point. Mr. George A. Brackett, of Minneapolis, demonstrated the feasibility of putting a wagon road over the

White Pass and showed so conclusively that the obstacles to cheaper transportation than the pack trail afforded might be removed and the way opened for the easy entrance of thousands of prospectors into the Klondike, that capital was willing to follow and build a railroad. The same result may be worked out in substantially the same way at Valdez, while as a regulator of railroad rates it would probably pay to maintain the wagon road permanently.

The next question, of course, is, where is the money to come from? Will the federal Government make the necessary appropriations? I do not know that any reliable estimates of the cost have been made, but the million dollars expended by Canada in five years for 875 miles of roads and trails has provided 230 miles of good wagon road which probably absorbed half of the total outlay. Across the coast range and among the inland mountains greater difficulties are to be encountered on this Valdez to Eagle route than on any part of the Klondike system, but for the greater part of the distance the construction of a wagon road would be neither difficult nor expensive. A bulletin of the United States Geological Survey estimates that wagon roads can be built in the interior of Alaska at an average cost of $1,000 to $1,500 a mile. Many a mining camp has already spent on excessive charges for the freightage of its supplies several times the cost of a wagon road. Nor would it be necessary for the United States to draw upon its own revenues alone to provide the money necessary. Alaska is already paying into the treasury of

the United States, and has been for years, a great many thousands of dollars annually more than the Government returns to the district of Alaska in the form of public service of any kind. This surplus above what is expended on the administration of the laws made for the district goes into the treasury of the United States and is appropriated to the general expenses of the Government. But whether the surplus revenues of Alaska are sufficient to aid materially in wagon-road construction or not, the Government at Washington owes it to the people who are enduring the privations and hardships of pioneering in Alaska to give them the transportation facilities * necessary to the development of that great country, as Canada has done for the British Yukon. We have a better country to develop, and the principle upon which public money is expended upon river and harbour improvements, upon the Weather Bureau, upon the coast survey, upon the

* At the second session of the Fifty-eighth Congress, Senator Nelson, of Minnesota, secured the incorporation in the army appropriation bill of a provision for the survey of a wagon road from Valdez to Fort Egbert at Eagle on the Yukon River, the survey to be made under the direction of the Secretary of War. This survey was made during the summer of 1904. The report is not public at this writing, but it is a foregone conclusion that no serious engineering difficulties were encountered.

Senator Nelson also secured at the same session the passage of a bill by the Senate providing that all receipts from liquor, occupation or trade licenses outside of incorporated towns, and all fines, fees, etc., outside of incorporated towns, except in case of direct violation of customs laws, and all fees collected by the clerks of the courts, after paying the expenses of the courts, shall be deposited with the treasury department to be known as the "Alaska fund." One-fourth of the fund, or so much as may be necessary, is to be set apart for schools, five per cent. of the fund is to be devoted to the care of the insane and all the remainder is to be devoted to the construction of wagon roads, bridges and trails in Alaska. The work is to be done under the supervision of a special commission of army officers detailed for the service. This bill has since passed the House.

mail service and in other ways for the benefit of trade and commerce justifies the use of a few hundreds of thousands where the benefits to be conferred are prospectively so great. If recent precedent is needed, we have the action of the Government in building roads in the Philippines. They were constructed originally as a military necessity, but their value to the commerce of the country has led to their use and maintenance for that purpose and to the construction of additional lines for the public good. What we can afford to do for the Philippines we can afford to do for Alaska.

And all this applies not only to the Valdez-Eagle road, but to the situation in the Seward Peninsula, on the Tanana, in the Circle City district, the Rampart district, and wherever the development of the country halts for that stimulus which only adequate means of transportation can give.

Notice should be taken in this connection of another projected railroad now under construction from a new town called Seward, on the east side of the Kenai peninsula and at the head of Resurrection Bay, almost due north to the Tanana River. Twenty-five miles are said to have been graded and ironed and the projectors claim to have plenty of money to carry out their plans. It would afford a direct route to Fairbanks and the great Tanana gold field.

When we arrived at Valdez we had been thirty days out of reach of the rest of the world by wire and were even willing to pay 45 cents a word for nothing less than ten-

word messages to hear from the "land of the living." Valdez received and banqueted the senatorial party and talked transportation facilities for two days. Unquestionably transportation is the key to Alaska's great mineral wealth. Without it little progress can be made; with it supplies will be cheapened, machinery may be taken in and the cost of production so reduced that tens of thousands of acres of gravel, not now workable at a profit, will begin to pour a golden stream into the channels of trade and commerce. It is a business proposition, but it is a big one and one in which the Government, from the nature of the case, must at least make a beginning.

The climate of Valdez is mild and the harbour is open all winter. As to the climate of Alaska, there may be said to be two. A mild, moist climate is found along the ocean front south of the coast range and the Alaska peninsula, and on the Aleutian Islands. In this part of Alaska, washed by the Japan current, the temperature rarely falls below zero. When the moist currents of air strike the coast range there is heavy precipitation, the snowfall for the winter at Valdez sometimes measuring from 50 to 60 feet calculated as it falls, and settling down to a depth of six or eight feet. Across the coast range in the interior and fronting Bering Sea the conditions are very different. The atmosphere is dry, the snowfall rarely exceeds two feet and the temperature has a range during the year from 60 or 70 below to 90 degrees above zero.

At the time of our visit Valdez was connected by Government telegraph, by way of Eagle, with Dawson, from

which a Canadian line runs to Ashcroft on the Canadian Pacific Railroad. During the summer of 1904 a cable, by way of Sitka and Juneau, with a branch to Skagway, was laid between Seattle and Valdez, and is now in operation. This cable connects at Valdez with the overland lines to Eagle, Rampart, Fairbanks and St. Michael; from St. Michael there is wireless telegraphic service to Nome. A telephone line is in operation between Nome and Council City and across the peninsula northward to the camps on Kotzebue Sound. Prince William Sound penetrates into the mainland farther than any other inlet open all the year on the south shore, and, for that reason, is a favourable point from which to initiate any kind of transportation system into the interior. It is 665 miles from Skagway to Eagle by the White Pass route, and only 420 miles from Valdez to Eagle by the military trail, over which it is proposed to build a railroad.

XI

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

OUR school geographies used to teach us that Mt. St. Elias, near the south shore of Alaska, was the highest mountain on the North American continent. And so it was, so far as the geographers of that day knew. It is only recently that we have learned differently. But this is an age of expansion, and when the explorers found recently another mountain about 150 miles north of Mt. St. Elias which is over 2,000 feet higher, it was appropriate that they should give it the name of the great expansionist and call it Mt. McKinley. Mt. St. Elias was the boast of Russian America, with its lofty altitude of 17,850 feet (Russian hydrographic chart). Our coast survey since the purchase has raised it to 19,500, of course. But Alaska, American Alaska, takes pride in the cold and stately grandeur of the yet unscaled summit of Mt. McKinley, which rises to a height of 20,160 feet, or nearly four miles above the level of the sea. Two unsuccessful attempts have been made to climb to the top of Mt. McKinley, one by Judge Wickersham of the central judicial district of Alaska, and one by the Cook exploring expedition. Mt. McKinley is far inland and behind the coast range, so that it cannot be seen at sea, but Mt. St. Elias is visible from ships one hundred miles away

on a clear day. A clear day, however, is a rare thing on the summit of Mt. St. Elias. Its snow-clad peak is wrapped in almost continuous cloud and storms rage on its bleak and wind-swept heights except at rare and brief intervals. The moisture from the sea, swept inland by the air currents, falls in rain or snow and here are formed the largest ice fields in Alaska.

The McCulloch, having on board the senatorial party, weighed anchor Sunday morning, August 16, in Valdez harbour, bound for Sitka. The next morning, when we came on deck, the sea was full of ice and there was "a nipping and an eager air" which sent us all below for our heaviest wraps. While the ship poked her nose between the tiny icebergs which literally covered the surface of the sea, there was a crackling and tinkling as the crystal shallops struck one against another and, washed by the lapping waves, took on the most fantastic shapes. It was a dull imagination, indeed, which could not see birds, and bears, and antlered deer, dancing canoes and many other interesting shapes on the glistening field of ice.

A glance ahead explained our unusual surroundings. About five miles off our port bow—you see we had been on the sea for nearly three weeks and had come to think in the language of the foc'sle—was seen a solid wall of ice apparently perpendicular, to a height variously estimated from 500 to 1,000 feet. A prudent shipmaster took us no nearer than four miles, but near enough for us to discover with our field-glasses the jagged and massive front of this



Islands in Sitka Harbour

white rampart, streaked with blue where the fissures opened for hundreds of feet straight down.

We were in front of the Malaspina glacier, the largest glacier in Alaska, and bearing the name of the one Italian explorer who reached these northern shores. Mt. St. Elias stands back fifty miles from the sea, the tallest of a group of mountains from whose summits flows down, through the valleys between the lower peaks, emerging like islands, a frozen mass of ice and snow seventy miles in width. The eastern half is what is known as a dead glacier, and is held back from the sea by a moraine, the deposit of ages, ground off the sides of the mountains by the sliding, slipping ice field. The western half, before which we have arrived, is "alive" and is continually dropping pieces of its crumbling front into the sea. For thirty miles and for nearly four hours, we sail along this icy cliff, marvelling at its wonderful extent and at the still more wonderful expanse of the ice field behind it, which reaches back for forty miles or more up the slopes of the white coast range. We are eager to catch a glimpse of old St. Elias, but the clouds hang in heavy masses around his head and conceal it from our disappointed vision.

We have learned by this time that Alaska has so many valuable resources that we are not surprised at the claim that it will soon produce petroleum in merchantable quantity and quality. During the night, after leaving Valdez, we passed Kayak, opposite the mouth of the Copper River, where three flowing oil wells are said to have been sunk, while promising indications are found on the adjacent



Sitka Totems

mainland. Analysis of the oil shows it to be of as good quality as the Pennsylvania product. The United States Geological Survey reports indications of oil at various places along the south shore, from Cape Yaktag, east of the mouth of Copper River, to the Alaska Peninsula, on the west side of Cook's Inlet.

Deposits of coal have been uncovered on the Alaska Peninsula and on Controller Bay near the mouth of Copper River. Alfred H. Brooks, chief of the division of Alaskan mineral resources, says this Controller Bay coal is the best thus far found on the Pacific coast of North America. Developments of the past year seem to have established the existence on the west side of Prince of Wales Island of a practically inexhaustible supply of some 26 varieties of marble of splendid quality, adapted to monumental and decorative work.

There is one remarkable man, who figured prominently on our Pacific coast for nearly thirty years, of whom little is generally known. Alexander Baranof, cast for the part of one of our modern captains of industry, would have marshalled the forces of science and invention, of labour and capital, with surprising ability. Taking charge of the affairs of the Russian American company in 1790, he made Kadiak Island the centre of his operations for a time, but eventually established his headquarters at Sitka. Possibly he might have found a more picturesque spot on which to found the central station of the Russian fur trade, but I have not seen it. Sitka is on the west side of Baranof Island, on the outer edge of the archipelago, but sheltered



Sitka in Winter

by capes and islands till its harbour affords a refuge to ships of every description. Baranof did not succeed in effecting a permanent settlement here without great difficulties; and one sad chapter of the long story of struggle and hardship and suffering and prodigal waste of human life which marked the Russian occupation relates to the massacre of the first colony by the savage Koloshes. But defeat only inspired him to greater effort and the name of Baranof is to this day held in great esteem by the descendants in Sitka of the men of Baranof's time. The great blockhouse built on the rocky eminence at the head of the harbour after Baranof had long been dead was known before it burned as Baranof Castle, and a public-house which has survived several generations bears his name and testifies that the fame of Sitka's most distinguished citizen is still alive there.

We do not produce such men nowadays. Probably because we do not need them. But Baranof had a work to do and did it. Rather slight of figure, by no means robust-looking, but hospitable to prodigality, measuring his hospitality in tankards of the vilest of liquors, he calculated the appreciation of himself among his guests by the liberality of their potations.

Not to drink with him was to give offence which called for satisfaction, and not to keep pace with him was to incur his contempt, or something worse. And yet this bullying roysterer, as he sometimes appeared, was loved by children, respected for his ability and his fairness by all his people and esteemed himself a chosen agent of Divine

Providence to carry out its purposes. His official reports are full of pious references to the favour of the Almighty when his enterprises were successful and of acknowledgments of the justice of the Divine disfavour when he was overtaken by disaster. A strange mixture of strength and weakness, of cruelty and gentleness, of failure and success, he is the conspicuous figure of the Russian régime, which continued for one hundred and twenty-five years.

Attended by the puffins, the seagulls and the sooty albatross, and accompanied at times by the spouting whale or the sportive blackfin which abounds in these North Pacific waters, we arrived in sight of Baranof Island in the morning of August 18, and crept past Mt. Edgecumbe and in among the little islands that dot the harbour of Sitka and give it that fairyland appearance which charms every visitor.

Of course we "do" Sitka, as other tourists have "done" it, for we are back at last on the beaten path. After 5,000 miles through the interior and among the islands of the Alaskan waters, we have come to that charming spot which every year attracts many travellers, who fancy, when they have gone home again, that they have seen Alaska. We visit Indian River Park, and the totem poles, the Jackson Museum, the Indian village, which, at a little distance, looks more like the residence quarter of a factory town, but quickly loses that resemblance on closer inspection. We climb the hill to the old Russian cemetery for a view of the town and the harbour, but cannot stay long enough with a landscape which spreads itself before the

eye but once in a lifetime; we trade with the curio-dealers, who supply their shelves from the Indian end of the town, where curio-making is the chief industry, and find it cheaper to deal with the middleman than with the manufacturer; we bare our heads in the old Greek church, the cathedral of the Archangel Michael, and listen to a special service while our interest centres chiefly in the rich decorations of the sacred place. A Madonna and Child illustrates the peculiar treatment of many of the pictures in an effort to do special honour to the subjects of the paintings. Except the faces and hands, the entire surface of the painting, the work of a Russian artist, is heavily overlaid with solid silver, finely wrought so as to produce a peculiar radiant effect.

The Sheldon Jackson Museum is a rich storehouse of the implements, weapons, articles of dress and all manner of handiwork, ancient and modern, of the Alaska Indians, as well as the repository of many valuable and interesting remains of the Russian occupation of the country.

But we are becoming surfeited with picturesque scenery and a little tired of commercially inclined Indians, and are more interested in rambling idly about the quiet streets of this quaint old town, where it is always 3 o'clock in the afternoon and nothing ever happens. Go to Sitka if you want to rest; that's all they do there. And who can blame them? No other occupation would be in keeping with the quiet seclusion of the place. You'll understand it all in a very few hours. There may be a big, busy, bustling world outside somewhere, of which you were once a part, but you



The Shore Walk Leading to Indian River Park

will take little interest in the fact. The summer air is balmy, and if the clouds do come sometimes, the falling rain only deepens the sense of satisfaction you will feel in having got off the earth, the busy earth. Who would have expected to find up here on the Alaskan coast a veritable lotus-land?

Sitka was the capital, so to speak, of Russian America, and when that vast territory was transferred to the United States, our flag, our symbol of sovereignty, was run up first at Sitka. Until recently Sitka has remained the capital, but it retains now no evidence of its former dignity except the residences of the governor and the surveyor general. All the other district offices have been removed to the more accessible and commercially important city of Juneau, on the regular route of the steamers between Seattle and Skagway. But without any organised territorial form of government in Alaska, it doesn't make much difference where the capital is.

It may surprise some who have not given much thought to the matter to know that this great district, nearly as big as that part of the United States east of the Mississippi River, and containing a population of 60,000 people, is governed entirely from Washington, except in the matter of local affairs managed by the few municipal corporations they have been allowed to organise. Congress has not failed to give to Hawaii a home government, and even Porto Rico enjoys a larger measure of home rule than is accorded to the people of Alaska, who are, so far as the white population is concerned, as familiar with, and as

thoroughly trained in the art of self-government as the people of Minnesota, for they are nearly all recent residents of the States. The fact is that the United States Government bought Alaska about thirty-five years ago and



The Greek Church at Sitka

then laid it aside and almost forgot about it. It is true that an unsuccessful attempt was made to govern it through the military arm of authority for a time, but the presence of the military wrought vastly more harm than good, and the soldiers were withdrawn. A governor and finally a judge and a few other district officers were appointed, till now there are three judges and three judicial districts with their court officers; a collector of customs and his deputies;

a surveyor-general, a register and receiver of the Land Office, a collector of internal revenue, two officers of the National Bureau of Education and four special agents of the Department of Agriculture, all of whom are appointive, and are actually sent out from the States because they have a "pull." I do not mean by that anything derogatory to the federal officers in Alaska, for so far as I know, with a few notable exceptions, they have been honest and capable; the method of their selection is the point of interest. There has been some special legislation by Congress with respect to Alaska, a general civil code and a criminal code have been framed, and municipal corporations authorised, but it was hardly to be expected that this could be made entirely satisfactory by a body of men sitting 5,000 or 6,000 miles away, very few of whom had ever seen Alaska or had any adequate idea of the needs of the district.

No wonder, then, that there is a strong, though not unanimous, sentiment in Alaska in favour of a territorial form of government. The wonder is that it is not more insistent in its demand than it is. Two facts already stated explain, in part at least, why Alaska has not had home rule before this. One is the size of the district; the other the lack of means of transportation. Population statistics are necessarily unreliable, but of the 63,000 reported in 1900, probably one-half are Eskimos, Indians, and creoles. That leaves something over 30,000 whites, chiefly Americans, scattered over this immense district, with very inadequate means of communication and transportation be-

tween different sections. Of this American population approximately one-third is in southeastern Alaska, which may be described as all that part between Yakutat Bay and Portland Canal, where, according to the late boundary decision, Alaska begins. Another third, roughly estimated, is at Nome, on the Seward Peninsula, and in all that region tributary from St. Michael north to the Kotzebue Sound country. The remainder are scattered along the Yukon, for 1,500 miles, along the Tanana, up on the headwaters of the Koyukuk in northern Alaska, down on the Kuskokwim in southwestern Alaska, in the Valdez and the Copper River valley, on the Kenai peninsula, and the southwest islands. These three arbitrary groups correspond very nearly with the division of Alaska into judicial districts.



Madonna in Greek Church, Sitka

Now the people of southeastern Alaska have about as much in common with the people of the Seward Penin-

sula as the people of Maine have with the people of Texas, and the people along the central Yukon are more remote in point of transportation and communication from the Kenai peninsula than is Boston from San Francisco. The nominal capital is now at Juneau, which is as accessible from other parts of Alaska as any place that could be selected. But suppose a legislature and a delegate to Congress were to be elected and returns made and a session held. If the election were held in the early summer the returns might all reach Juneau in time to have the votes counted and the result announced before the summer was over, but any officers whose presence was required in Juneau would be obliged to leave the Seward Peninsula before the freeze-up, about the 20th of October, and could not reach home again till the next summer.

Still greater difficulties would lie in the way of officers chosen from other sections. The telegraph line from Valdez to Eagle, and Rampart, and Ft. Gibbon, and St. Michael, and Nome is now completed, and will bring the remote parts of this vast expanse closer together, in the sense of communication, but the difficulties of travel remain and will till railroads or wagon roads, the necessity of which has already been pointed out, are constructed.

These facts of the remoteness of the different groups of population from each other without adequate means of transportation are practical difficulties in the way of the satisfactory operation of a territorial form of government which many of the people of Alaska duly recognise and on account of which they are willing to stand up among their



Interior of Greek Church, Sitka

clamorous friends who are eager for home rule, as they call it, and contend that the conditions are not ripe.

The expression of sentiment varied according to locality. From Ketchikan to Skagway the predominating sentiment was for territorial government; along the Yukon we heard almost nothing said about it, at Nome opinion was divided again and was no doubt fairly represented in the vote of the citizens' committee on the address presented to the senatorial committee. That address, among other things, asked for territorial government, but the vote of the committee on that proposition was 12 for to 11 against it.

The Alaskans expect that country to become some part of the United States, that several states will be carved out of that great district which will be admitted to the Union, and they talk that way. The Nome memorial so expresses the hope of that community. They probably do not know it, but just that possibility is one thing which operates more or less effectively against their chances for territorial government. I want to say distinctly that, so far as I have been able to discover, no prejudice against territorial government on this account exists in the minds of the territorial committee, but it is a fact that there is a sentiment against territorial organisation in Alaska among leaders of the Senate, who hold that territory outside of the United States as now constituted should never be admitted to full membership in the union of states, but that the Congress should retain full power of government over non-contiguous territory without promise of the privilege of future statehood. While there is obvious ground for oppo-

sition so far as our island possessions are concerned, with their alien populations, there is no such reason to resist the entrance of Alaska or parts of it into the Union when the time comes—as come it will, so far as population is concerned. The people of Alaska are not to be classed with the inhabitants of the islands. They are American citizens of the better type in many respects, while ignorant and un-American foreigners are scarce in that country.

But, as I have already suggested, the main difficulties in the way of territorial government for Alaska are not political, but physical. If the population were collected in one reasonably compact district and readily accessible, the demand could not be denied. Over against this the Alaskans cite the history of territorial organisation beginning with the great ordinance of 1787, wherein the immense area northwest of the Ohio was guaranteed a representative government when it should have a population of 5,000; or the territory of Oregon, which included Washington, Idaho and parts of Wyoming and Montana, when it took six months to send a letter from the territorial capital to Washington; or the case of Michigan, organised as a territory with a population of 4,000 scattered over what is now Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and part of the Dakotas; or the case of Dakota Territory organised with less than 4,000 inhabitants.

These facts are pertinent and they suggest, it seems to me, the proper and most satisfactory treatment of the Alaskan question by Congress. Southeast Alaska, with a white population of 15,000, should be made a territory

by itself with its capital at Juneau; northwest Alaska, having a permanent white population of about 13,000, should constitute another territory with its capital at Nome, and the remainder of the district, the great central and comparatively inaccessible portion, should remain substantially as it is till developments warrant a change.

The people of Alaska are practically united in the demand for a delegate in Congress.* They are entitled to a delegate and Congress has only hesitated on how he should be chosen. The same difficulties would attend the election of one delegate for the whole district that must be contended with in the choice of territorial officers, and if Congress denies territorial organisation of the district as a whole on those grounds, it would not be consistent to provide for the election of a delegate. Appointment by the President of some resident of Alaska would be reasonably satisfactory, but better still if two territories be erected, as above suggested, would be the election of a delegate from each of the territories and the appoinment of a third from the remaining district.

This plan may be far in advance of what Congress may be ready to grant, but it is an arrangement well warranted by the conditions as they exist, and would promote the interests of the district more than the creation of one great unwieldy territory.

But as to the benefit to be gained by having a delegate

* Senator Nelson introduced a bill last winter (1904) in the Senate providing for the election of a delegate to Congress from Alaska, but it failed to pass. A similar bill passed the House.

in Congress, there is no room for controversy. Alaska has suffered enough from the activities of self-appointed delegates and delegates representing political factions and special interests, and from the lack of an authorised representative to press her claims on the attention of Congress; she has everything to gain from the presence in Congress of an honest man capable of presenting the interests of the district clearly and convincingly before the committees of both houses.

XII

AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES OF ALASKA

GOVERNOR BRADY is one of the most highly respected and one of the most unpopular men in Alaska. John G. Brady went to Alaska as a missionary to the Indians. He is a thoroughly upright and honourable man. Everybody admits that and yields the respect which high character is always sure to command.

But he is not progressive and hence his unpopularity, particularly among that element not deeply in sympathy with the moral standards with which he measures public and private conduct. There have been no scandals in the governor's office, and there will be none while he is its occupant, but there are those in Alaska, and they are not alone those who are out of sympathy with the governor on moral and religious grounds, who feel that a more aggressive and progressive policy than he has pursued would have been of advantage to the district. Among these are the ardent advocates of a territorial form of government, who intimate more or less clearly that if the governor would spend the money his position gives him and the leisure its freedom from burdensome duties affords in trying to impress upon the Government at Washington that it is its duty to give Alaska home rule, he would be none the less ornamental and a good deal more useful.

One of the first things this suggested to me when I discovered this state of public sentiment was the unconscious tribute it implied to the grey-haired old governor. Certainly, if he were not a pretty good type of man, he would never be expected by anybody to do a thing so unprofessional in a politician as to labour for the abolition of the office he holds at $5,000 a year for the sake of entering an expensive and uncertain campaign for one that might command less salary.

I am able, however, to discover other than selfish reasons why Governor Brady is not an active advocate of territorial government for Alaska. There are plenty of Alaskans who hold no fat federal offices who are opposed. They not only think that the district is too big and unwieldy, considering the number of people it contains, the manner in which they are distributed and the difficulties of communication and transportation, to make it practicable to administer a territorial government at reasonable expense—as I have indicated in a previous chapter—but they believe the institution of a territorial government would check development. It is significant that this apprehension is entertained quite generally among the most substantial business men of Alaska. Whether this is due in any degree to the fact that they are bearing less than their share of the burden of taxation under the present federal régime or not I shall not venture to assert; but there is no doubt that many of them are sincerely apprehensive lest capital, which Alaska needs as much as any country in the world, may be afraid to venture under the control of a territorial gov-

ernment. No doubt capital, which is always timid, would be affected more or less by the inauguration of a new order of things in Alaska, but it is not to be expected that territorial authority would or could be used to disturb business and check development more effectively than the federal authority has been known to do on at least one occasion. The scandals which attended the exercise of federal authority at Nome at one time can hardly be matched by anything likely to result from the creation of a representative home-rule government. On the contrary, I should look for an improvement in many respects when the federal courts are relieved of some of the administrative duties now imposed. I do not mean to imply that the judges are now abusing their authority, but many of the functions they exercise are not judicial.

As it is now the judges of the federal courts are not only the judicial but in a large measure the executive officers of the district. They issue licenses for all purposes, issue franchises to business corporations, grant charters to incorporated towns, appoint United States commissioners who are the local justices of the peace, coroners and recorders, and the officers of the courts collect the occupation tax which, outside of the incorporated towns, is the only tax. When the manufacturer, or merchant, or freighter, or fish-canner, or hotel-keeper, or any other kind of business man commences any undertaking he is required to make a statement of the amount of business he expects to do in a year, and must pay a tax graded according to the volume of his business. If at the end of the year he finds

he has done more business than he expected to when he commenced, he is required to pay up to what he should have paid in the first instance. This would seem to be a very loose way of collecting taxes, but it works better on the whole than might be expected. In the incorporated towns, which have a form of government similar to that common in the States, and of which I believe there are only seven or eight, an additional property tax may be levied for municipal purposes. Of the occupation tax collected by the federal authorities in the towns the whole amount is turned over to the town treasurers, but the federal judge apportions the money between the city council and the school board according to their necessities.*

The report of the senatorial committee shows that Alaska has yielded in revenues to the general Government since the cession by Russia $10,000,000, which is $1,000,000 more than the entire expenditure in her behalf by the Government. That is to say, the people of Alaska have paid for all their local government and all the federal

* The Fifty-eighth Congress has provided that all the occupation taxes collected outside of the incorporated towns shall be paid into the treasury of the United States, there to be maintained as a separate "Alaska fund" and to be devoted to three distinct purposes. One-fourth of this fund, or so much as may be necessary, is to be expended on the establishment and support of public schools for white children and children of mixed blood who lead a civilised life; five per cent. of this fund, or so much as may be necessary, is set apart for the care of the insane, and all the remainder is to be devoted to the construction and maintenance of roads under the direction of a board of commissioners to be composed of three officers of the United States Army. Heretofore the expenses of the courts and the education of the Indian children have been provided for out of this occupation tax, which is a discrimination against the people of Alaska, as in all the organised territories of the United States the federal Government pays all these expenses. It is expected that after the deductions above mentioned have been made from the "Alaska fund" there will remain for road-building purposes about $70,000 annually.

government they have had, and all the money expended on behalf of the natives, and $1,000,000 besides. When one contemplates these figures it is not difficult to understand why the Alaskan feels that he is not given a square deal, when the Government at Washington pockets a large sum in the way of excess revenues, derived through direct taxes levied upon him, and then declines to give him home rule on the plea that it would cost too much.

But I have been diverted into a further discussion of the political or governmental situation in Alaska, whereas I commenced this chapter with an entirely different purpose in mind. I first thought of Governor Brady in connection with his splendid garden around his residence in Sitka and its value as an object lesson in what are the agricultural possibilities of Alaska. " Can they raise anything but icebergs up in that cold country? " is a question I have been requested to answer many times, and I presume it has arisen in the mind of some who have followed my story of the senatorial trip through Alaska. Of course Governor Brady's garden is not exactly a fair test of what can be done in this respect in Alaska, because it is not in Alaska proper, but on an island where the climate is much milder than it is in Minneapolis. The temperature rarely reaches zero at Sitka. On the 19th of August I saw in Governor Brady's garden several varieties of potatoes, all of which looked exceedingly thrifty and some of which had been producing fine-looking tubers, ripe enough for use, for several weeks; a large patch of splendid raspberries, a little past their prime; large red currants,



Grown in Alaska

ripe strawberries of superior quality and size; fine cabbages, cauliflower, lettuce, radishes, turnips and other vegetables of that character; peas and beans and celery, and practically all the vegetables that thrive in our Minnesota gardens and some that do not; while the flower garden was gorgeous in variety and richness of colour. Governor Brady takes great pride in his garden of about two acres, and doubtless could derive considerable revenue from it if he desired; but, as already stated, this would not signify much as to the possibilities of the interior of Alaska if it were not reinforced by personal observation and a great deal of concurring testimony with respect to the growth of food and forage plants beyond the coast range.

The importance of successful agriculture and stock-raising to the development of the mineral resources of the country is obvious. It was of importance, for instance, to learn on our way to Dawson that the raising of potatoes and cabbage, and turnips, and of oats, barley and rye for forage has become so profitable at Ft. Selkirk on the Yukon as to induce several farmers to engage there in that business for the Dawson market. At Eagle, where Ft. Egbert is situated, 100 miles northwest of Dawson, the commandant, as already stated, has a garden of four or five acres, where the soldiers raise potatoes, turnips, cabbages, peas, lettuce, radishes and other vegetables for their own use. At Circle City, still farther north, was seen a field of oats which probably did not ripen but which would produce good forage. Similar examples were found at other points on the Yukon, but the best demonstration

of possible agriculture was found at Holy Cross Mission on the Yukon, where the Jesuit fathers have the prize garden of interior Alaska.

But the people of Alaska do not look upon the Yukon valley, where there is undoubtedly a great deal of good soil, as prospectively the agricultural region of Alaska. That, by consent of many who have travelled extensively over the district, is to be found along the Tanana and in the Copper River valley. A dozen witnesses testified of their own observation that there is a fine body of agricultural land along the Tanana which, much to the regret of the whole party, we could not visit for lack of time and suitable means of transportation. One of the most satisfactory reports with regard to that section was obtained at Eagle from Lieutenant Mitchell of the United States signal service, who had travelled it thoroughly in surveying and constructing the Government telegraph line. The Tanana River rises north of Mt. St. Elias near the boundary between Canada and Alaska and flows north of west into the Yukon. Along this river there is said to be a fine valley averaging 30 miles in width and at least 200 miles long. It is partly timbered and partly open meadow land covered to considerable extent with a tall, blue stem grass. The climate in this valley is reported much milder than up on the Yukon and the summer season nearly a month longer. Not much has been done in experimentation there, but it is believed by those who know most about this country that it will produce some of the food vegetables profitably and that, while they may not always ripen, oats,

barley and rye will produce abundant forage crops for cattle. A thousand head of cattle were driven over the Dalton trail three years ago to Dawson, skirting this region on the east, and subsisting all the way on the native



Potatoes from Kadiak

grasses. They arrived in Dawson in good condition with a loss of only 1 per cent. The mail-carriers who cross the Tanana from Valdez to Eagle report that oats spilled where they have fed their pack horses spring up and head out the next season. I saw a bunch of this grain at Forty-Mile on the Yukon, which was three and a half feet high and headed, but the grains were light. The plant would make good forage, however.

In view of the radical and repeated revision of opinion which has become necessary in recent years with regard to the agricultural possibilities of our Northwest in the States and in Canada, as the producing area has gradually forced its way northward through Minnesota, the Dakotas and Canada, I am not disposed to question the claims of those who contend that the time will come when the Tanana valley will be settled by farmers who will produce the meat, and dairy and poultry products, and a large share of the vegetables and small fruits consumed in the interior mining districts of Alaska. What this will mean as an aid to the mining development of Alaska can scarcely be overstated. It is not to be expected that Alaska will ever export any of these products, but if her ranchmen can supply the home market in these respects, it will be of the highest importance to this country.

In considering the agricultural possibilities of these northern latitudes where, of course, the season is short, proper allowance must be made for the amount of sunshine the plant gets during the long summer days. In the Tanana and Yukon valleys, for instance, the sun shines from eighteen to twenty-two hours during June and July, and not infrequently the temperature rises to 90 degrees. The same facts of nature which explain rapid and wonderful plant growth in our own Northwest and in Canada are found in portions of Alaska. I have seen wheat as far advanced along the North Fork of the Saskatchewan on the 20th of June as it was in central Minnesota at the same time. There, with good soil, of which there is no

lack, the long hours of sunshine each day bring forward the wheat plant with surprising rapidity, while the roots are so well fed with the moisture coming out of the gradually thawing ground that the danger from drought is almost entirely eliminated. Very similar conditions seem to exist in Alaska, where the ground is frozen to such a



Varieties of Oats Grown at Sitka

depth that the thawing and moisture-producing process is going on all through the summer. The evidence is seen in the wild grasses, which grow annually to a height of three or four feet, and sometimes even higher. As for the soil, it resembles that of hilly countries in lower latitudes, light and sandy on the elevations, but heavier and richer

in the valleys. In a natural state the ground is covered in large part with a thick matted growth of grass and vines and moss, so thick that it feels to the tread as if one were walking on a sponge. This matted vegetable growth is moist in summer from the surface thawing of the frozen ground, but when this thick covering is cut away and the sun is given a chance to reach the ground, the soil is thawed to a greater depth and the surface dries out.

Alaska has not been surveyed, and cannot be successfully on the township and section plan in vogue on our western prairies. The Government has established 320 acres as the size of a homestead claim, but in the course of time it will be necessary to adopt the system of land surveys to the topography of the country, surveying only the valleys which may be found adapted to agriculture with reference to the water-courses and the " lay of the land," and without regard to towns and ranges or conformity to established lines of latitude and longitude.

Professor George C. Georgeson, formerly special agent of the Department of Agriculture in Alaska, is regarded as something of an enthusiast. Perhaps he is. But he has studied the agricultural possibilities of the country more than anybody else, and is the best authority obtainable on this subject. He contends that it is a great mistake to underestimate the agricultural resources of Alaska; that " there are 100,000 square miles of territory in Alaska admirably adapted to agriculture. There could never be a greater misconception in regard to a geographical fact than the popular idea that Alaska is a snow-covered waste.

As a matter of fact, one can travel from one end of the Yukon to the other in summer and never see snow except on the mountains. On the contrary, one will see a tangle of luxuriant vegetation, large forests, and such delicacies as wild raspberries, red currants, huckleberries, and cranberries in profusion. In places the grass grows as high as a man's shoulders."

Dr. R. A. F. Penrose, of Philadelphia, a mining engineer, who has studied conditions in northern latitudes in Europe and Asia as well as in America, came to Dawson while our party was there in July. In speaking of the resources of Alaska he said to the Dawson *News:*

"I notice the United States senatorial committee now in Dawson is gathering data as to the agricultural possibilities of Alaska. Some may think this a waste of time. I believe not. I have travelled across Siberia and have made careful study of its great undertakings in agricultural pursuits. In a latitude of 65 degrees north, one nearer the Pole than Dawson, the Russians raise barley, oats, and other cereals with great success. Barley is the most successful cereal. Vegetables of all kinds thrive, and are as fine as those raised in any other part of the world.

"The ground here thaws two or three feet below the surface in summer. In parts of Siberia where such success has been had in farming, the frost disappears to a depth no greater than nine inches.

"The people of Siberia learned what to grow there to best advantage by a process of selection reached by experiments extending through perhaps hundreds of years.

The greatest argument in support of the agricultural success in Siberia is that the country supports a population of 12,000,000 people, twice as many as Canada. That is sufficient to show the land is by no means a waste. Of course it is twice as large as the United States, and the population is scattered. But several cities of 20,000 to 60,000 are maintained."

In condemning Alaska as an uninhabitable region we sometimes forget that a large part of the great empire of Russia lies in the same latitude. The province of Archangel, which lies farther north than the Tanana, or the greater part of the Yukon valley, has a population of 350,000. The city of Archangel has 20,000 people, and the province exports considerable quantities of grain, flax, fish, skins and tar. The climate is quite as severe as that of Alaska.

I do not care to be regarded as a believer in large agricultural possibilities for Alaska, but I am impressed with the probability that in the interior of that remote country, where food supplies from the States must always be expensive, it will be practicable and profitable to produce meat and dairy and poultry and garden products in such quantity and at such prices as to solve the problem of development of large areas of gold-bearing gravel.

In the course of a public hearing at Nome, where the senatorial committee sat to hear the statement of miners and business men as to what Congress could do to forward the development of Alaska, Judge Dubose, an influential member of the Nome bar and attorney for one of the

transportation companies, said that in the Nome district about 20,000 claims had been staked and recorded, and that only about 500 were being worked to any extent at all; and that represents a state of things general throughout Alaska, though probably not quite so much accentuated in other sections as on the Seward Peninsula. The trouble is that the mining laws operate adversely to the interests of the real miner. At Seattle and Juneau and Skagway and Eagle and Rampart and Nome—everywhere there was complaint of abuses of privilege made easy by the operation of laws that do not fit the case. Under the mining law in Alaska a prospector may fill his pockets with powers of attorney before he starts out, and when he thinks he has found something worth while he may not only stake in his own name, but in the names of all his friends who have made him their agent. These claims are recorded, and all the area covered by them is monopolised. There would be less objection to that if it were not for the fact that the requirements as to development work are so loose that the claimant may escape the necessity of doing anything for a year, and under certain circumstances for two years. Then all that is really necessary is for the original claimant to change names on the claims and record again for another year or two years, as the case may be. Neither the original claimant nor his principals are obliged to do any development work so long as the list of names holds out, and the name of a claimant may, in course of time, be transferred from one piece of property to another till a dozen pieces or more

may have stood in his name without anything being done to develop any of them.

Now, the law intended that every claimant should do at least $100 worth of development work on his claim every year; but even where there is some pretence of compliance, there is often no practical result. Labour, figured at $10 a day, with time spent in going to and returning from the claim, may result in moving a few shovelfuls of dirt, but it means nothing in the development of the country.

But it may be asked, Why do men take claims if not to work them and get something out of them? In order to take advantage of the labour of somebody else, generally. These 19,500 claims that Judge Dubose referred to are held generally by people who are waiting for somebody else to do something that shall establish their value. The result is that the country is nearly all staked and filed on where there is any prospect of finding gold, and the late-comer has no show, no matter how willing he may be to go ahead and develop what he stakes.

Another handicap to the development of the country is the fact that the claim markings are not permanent but are easily obliterated, and in addition to that the system of describing and recording claims is so indefinite and unsystematic that there is no way to tell certainly, when a claim is filed, whether the same ground has ever been filed on before or not. This leads to endless litigation and, in fact, invites it when a claim proves to be valuable. One valuable mine was visited at Nome to which the present

owners had bought six different titles. That is to say, six different claimants were able to make it appear, through the looseness of the system of describing and recording, that they had claims which they were disposed to contest in the courts. The door is opened wide to unlimited extortion by unscrupulous men, and those who would be glad to put money into the development and operation of mines are afraid to do so. It would mean millions of development and output to the Nome district every year if this dog-in-the-manger business could be stopped.

Perhaps I have referred often enough to the better methods they have adopted in Yukon territory on the Canadian side, but when studying conditions at Nome I could not avoid contrasting the miserable tangle in which the titles to mining property are involved there with the well-devised system at Dawson, where in the gold commissioner's office it is possible at any time to find the exact legal status of any piece of property in the Klondike. Descriptions are definite, double filing on the same piece of property practically impossible, the claimant is protected in the title to his property so long as the books show a clear record, powers of attorney are not recognised in taking mining claims, no claimant may file on more than one claim on the same creek, and failure to keep up development or assessment work forfeits title, and, as I recall it, it may not be renewed by the same claimant. I know there is complaint by Americans of favouritism and corruption in the Klondike; but, conceding a good deal of both, the system in vogue there is much more

business-like and satisfactory than the methods pursued on the Alaska side of the boundary. An illustration of the manner in which the interests of Alaska are neglected, which any one can appreciate, is afforded by the fact that nowhere in that whole district is there such an officer as the gold commissioner of Yukon territory, to whom the investor or prospector can go for information about a mining enterprise or a new strike.

I have taken the space to note only a few of the faults of the mining laws, as seen from the standpoint of a layman. The senatorial committee was so much impressed by the necessity of radical revision of the laws as applied to Alaska that they asked the bar of Nome to formulate a practically new code and send it to them at Washington for their guidance in legislation on this subject.

Our last stopping-place was Sitka. Meanwhile the McCulloch has passed through Peril Straits, named because of the hazards of navigation there, to Juneau, to which city, visited on our upward voyage to Skagway, the committee returned in accordance with a promise to come back and give the business men there a chance to be heard on the needs of Alaska. With her prow cutting the quiet waters of the inside channel, we are now bound for Seattle and home.



XIII

INDIANS OF ALASKA

A MORE striking illustration of the operation of the cruel law of the "survival of the fittest" is seldom found than is afforded by the condition of the Indians and Eskimos of Alaska since the white man learned there was gold in their country. The Indian is falling back everywhere before the advance of the white man, but nowhere has his retreat been converted into such an almost complete rout as in Alaska. The years 1898 and 1899 witnessed the great rush to the gold fields of Alaska, and it is estimated that the Indian and Eskimo population has been reduced by death fully 40 per cent. during the past six years. I question these appalling figures, but the estimate is hazarded by more than one who has had opportunity to observe the condition of these unhappy people.

But, granting all that ought to be allowed for exaggeration, it is not difficult for any one who has travelled extensively through that country to see that there has been a frightful decimation of the native population, and to understand some of the reasons for it. The deserted villages and the wretched condition of nearly all that retain a remnant of their former population tell a sad and pitiful story. When the Russian came he brought with him vices



Eskimo Woman Cooking Her Supper on the Sandspit at Nome

and diseases which wrought havoc, and in the frequent clashes at arms the natives suffered heavy losses. But the Russian was merciful compared to the American. The Russian had use for the native, and after a time the trade relation was so well established that the native derived something of profit from it.

When the American came the fur trade had declined, and the contact of the two races meant little to the weaker one except further demoralisation and ruin through vice and disease. I do not mean to say that the original condition of the natives of Alaska had been free from the consequences of immorality and ignorance, but their condition was such as to cause them to fall an easy prey to all the demoralising influences which usually attend the first wave of the white man's civilisation. We have seen the same thing within our own borders. Our "century of dishonour" has written its record of injustice and wrong done to the Indians here in our own country in lines of ineffaceable disgrace, but the hand illumination, so to speak, has been put in since Alaska became ours.

And yet no people ever deserved better of their conquerors. Long before the American invasion in search of gold commenced, the tribal organisation, so far as it had existed, had been pretty well broken up, and the native population presented an unresisting front. Not only so, but there is among them a natural disposition to hospitality and generosity which should have insured them kindness and consideration in return, but which has often only encouraged imposition and wrong. Our Government



has not been entirely insensible of its obligations in this connection. It has tried to do something for the education of the Indian, and a law was enacted at one time prohibiting the sale of liquor to any one in Alaska, with such results as might have been expected. Enforcement of the law was so utterly impossible under the circumstances that it was repealed, but not till the Indians had been taught the art of manufacturing extensively the vilest and most dangerous concoctions, which they consumed in practically unrestricted quantities. I do not mean to assume that they would not have obtained liquor under a license system, or would not have learned to manufacture the demonising substitutes, but the prohibitory law, with its utter impracticability on that far frontier, furnishes an illustration of the failure of the Government to protect these people of the North from the almost certain consequences of their ignorance and childish helplessness in the presence of many of the representatives of a superior race, who forgot to take their consciences with them when they went to meet the native and exploit him for their own benefit.

Some of the ways in which the white man debauches the native Alaskans cannot be particularised in this place, but the consequences are in evidence in distressing frequency there. Nor are the native Alaskans falling like leaves of the forest before the ills incident to immorality alone, for it will never be known what frightful fatalities followed an epidemic of measles which swept over Alaska three years ago. Gaining a foothold in one place, it was quickly carried from village to village and from barabarra to

igloo. Unacquainted with the nature of the malady, and ignorant of any remedy other than the incantations and tricks of the shaman, the fatalities were numbered by the thousands.

When the Indians of Alaska had their country to themselves they subsisted upon the fish and game and wild fruits which the country produced, and, though never numerous, were thrifty and strong in numbers compared to their present decadent state. Dried and smoked salmon dipped in rancid seal oil is still a delicacy as well as a staple, but to their menu of game and fish and wild berries they have added flour and tea and coffee and sugar and bacon. Their appliances and methods of cooking seem not to be as well adapted to these articles as to their native foods; at all events, they do not seem to nourish them well, either from lack of quantity or lack of intelligent preparation. I do not know just why it is, but it is the general verdict that the " Boston man's " food, to say nothing of the " Boston man's " drinks, has not been to the native's advantage. When he was the sole occupant of the country he clothed himself in skins and was comfortable in the long and severe winters, but since the white man has come in such numbers he has begun to imitate him in dress. He has discarded his furs and shivers and contracts pneumonia and consumption in the white man's clothing, of which he gets only the poorest quality and not enough of it. The ravages of pulmonary diseases have been heavy, and these disorders are so prevalent as to prevent white parents from allowing their children to go



Fourth of July at Metlakahtla

to the same schools with the native children, even when there are no other schools available.

Industry and forehandedness are lessons which they, in common with other natives of America, have never learned, but they are more indolent and careless of the future from their disposition to do as the white man does. They pitch their tents in summer near the white man's towns, and hang around the streets, sometimes selling a few trinkets and often cheated out of the trifling sums they get for them through their propensity for gambling. They see the streets of the mining towns like Nome full of idle men, and seeing that these men apparently live without work, seem to think they can and ought to do so, too.

For these people the Government of the United States has done practically nothing, while legislation conceived in the interest of white men has pretty nearly destroyed their most productive source of revenue. The game laws have operated disastrously to their declining trade in furs by making it unlawful to kill some of the most important fur-bearing animals when their pelts are at their best, and prohibiting the white traders to deal in them or send them to market. It is charged also that these game laws are taken advantage of by some unscrupulous dealers to beat down the prices paid the Indians for such as are bought, on the ground that the traffic is dangerous and that therefore the dealer cannot afford to take the risk unless he gets his goods at very low figures. From both standpoints the operation of the law bears hardest upon the native.



Berry Pickers

This is a sample of legislation enacted at Washington by a body of men few of whom have ever taken the pains to visit the country personally and see enough of it and its needs to make laws intelligently for its government.

There are four different families or groups of the natives of Alaska. Ethnologically they are an interesting study, but there is no room here to consider them from that standpoint. The native of northern and northwestern Alaska is an Eskimo, and often exhibits strong resemblances to some of the people of Asia, particularly the Japs. An illustration of a dance in the kazhim or village council-house, on St. Michael Island, shows the prominence of the Japanese features. The inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands are another group, and those of the far interior are known by the various names of Innuits or Tinnehs or Athabaskans. On the south coast and on the islands of the archipelago are a number of small groups known under the general name of Thlinkets. Among these are the Chilkats, the Haidahs, and the Tsimsheans. The more remote the more friendly and hospitable they appear to be, while those nearest bear more resemblance to the warlike tribes of our western frontier.

While we have not hesitated to drive back the Indians within the boundaries of the United States from one place to another as white settlement has advanced across the continent from east to west, we have made some pretence of recognising the rights of the original possessors of the land. We have purchased lands and made treaties, and have established reservations and rendered so-called



equivalents in the way of rations and clothing. The Indian of the States has become a ward of the nation, with a bureau in one of the departments at Washington and agents on the reservations to see that he gets what we have conceded he is entitled to.

Of all these things not one, so far as I have been able to learn, has ever been done for the Alaskans. The land was theirs before the Russians claimed it in the name of the Emperor, but no rights of possession * were ever recognised, except in the one instance where Baranof, for policy's sake, offered to purchase ground enough from the Sitkans on which to erect his buildings for a Russian trading-post, though at the same time assuring the chief that his master, the Emperor of Russia, claimed all the country and was well disposed toward his subjects, the natives of Alaska. When Alaska came into possession of the United States we were all such imperialists that nobody thought to consult the wishes of the natives in the matter. But surely the assumption of sovereignty implied some responsibilities and obligations to the natives of the country. The only evidence that the Government acknowledges any obligations to them is the small amount of money expended for Indian schools.

The educational work done by the Government in Alaska, outside of the incorporated towns, is carried on mainly in connection with the several mission stations of

*Judge James Wickersham of the central judicial division has decided that Russian half-breeds and native Eskimos are citizens. The chief benefit will be to clothe them with power to take mining claims, acquire title to other real property, take out licenses as pilots and shipmasters, and the like.

the various religious denominations. This involves the appropriation of public funds to the support of sectarian schools, but as all denominations share according to their school attendance there is no ground for complaint by any of them, although the collaboration of the church and state in matters of education is generally recognised as dangerous. However, it is the only way in which the work of educating the children of the natives could be accomplished. Men and women inspired by religious zeal will incur hardships and make sacrifices in this work which would not be endured by teachers influenced chiefly by financial considerations. The Government, however, exercises a degree of supervision over all these schools, and encourages education not only in the common branches of the ordinary rural school, but in such simple arts as are likely to be most useful to the pupil. These schools are not always entirely Indian schools. It often happens that children of white parents and Russian creoles are attendants with the Indian children. Notable among the schools where industrial training is given are Holy Cross Mission at Koserefsky, on the Yukon, and in the Sitka Industrial School. These institutions teach the boys the use of tools, the raising of crops, and the rudiments of several trades, while the girls are taught sewing and housekeeping. The opportunities for making use of this industrial training are not as many as could be desired for either boys or girls, but the boys have more chances to apply their knowledge in gainful occupations than girls. The fate of the educated Indian girl is often one that cannot



Eskimo Woman and Child

be contemplated with satisfaction, and this is true not only in Alaska, but among the Indians in the States. Incorporated towns maintain public schools of the usual plan and scope. Outside of these towns there are thirty-three of these so-called public schools, although connected in nearly every instance with some church mission, and having an enrollment of 2,100 pupils.

And yet it is not fair to conclude that the Indians of Alaska cannot be taught to be useful and self-supporting. Reference was made in the first chapter of this story of the tour of the senatorial committee to the unique settlement known as Metlakahtla, on Annette Island, one of the most southerly in the American portion of the southwest archipelago. Here the Indian problem has been worked out with the most satisfactory results, and the successful experiment is valuable as evidence of what the Alaska Indian is capable of.

William Duncan came to Port Simpson as a lay missionary in 1857, when the port was an important Hudson Bay Company's trading-post. He found there a community of Indians of the lowest character. They were cannibals on occasion. He began by learning the language of these Tsimsheans. Then he commenced to teach them not only religion but industry. More unpromising material out of which to make civilised, Christianised, and practical men and women, supporting themselves by the arts of civilised life, could not be found on the American continent. The Aleuts and Eskimos and Tinnehs of the more northern latitudes are refined and cultivated by compari-



Metlakahtla

son with these savage Tsimsheans when Father Duncan began his patient and persistent work among them.

Unhappily, too, he had to contend, not only with the ignorance and superstition and cannibalism of the Indians themselves, but with a narrow ecclesiasticism which finally drove him and his Indians from old Metlakahtla on the British side to the new Metlakahtla on the American side, to which they removed seventeen years ago. William Duncan was a layman, and he had always conducted his religious services according to the simplest forms, thus proving that the spectacular in religion is not necessary to reach the Indian.

A high-church priest sent to oversee his work undertook to introduce forms and ceremonies and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which Father Duncan, for sufficient and not very obscure reasons, had thought best not to inaugurate just yet among these savages so shortly reclaimed from cannibalism. He opposed the innovations of the new priest, and the Indians, who had come to regard him with love and veneration, supported him. The early result was a division and a new church, with Father Duncan at the head and nearly all the Indians in it. Out of this finally grew a controversy about their property rights in their church and their homes. When the Indians found that they could get no title to either, and arrangements had been made by Father Duncan with the United States Government by which they could have Annette Island as the property of their community, they left old Metlakahtla, where they had built houses and a church

and had established several simple industries. They took with them only their personal belongings and set out in their canoes to commence all over again—and yet not where they started under Father Duncan's guidance, for they could not be robbed of their religion or the advancement they had made in civilisation.



Father Duncan

It is a pathetic story which recounts the sacrifices they made for their religious and communal liberty. The Pilgrim fathers in their migration to a new world for conscience' sake were scarcely more heroic in spirit than these pilgrims of Metlakahtla. The work of thirty years of toilsome and patient struggle up the long and weary pathway which they had climbed from a state of savagery to the condition of an orderly, law-abiding, and self-governing Christian community—all they had achieved as represented in a neat and well-built village, which compelled the admiration of travellers

from Europe and America—was left behind to begin again in the wilderness.

This migration took place in 1887, and no people have been more deeply interested and none so vitally concerned in the result of the controversy over the Alaskan boundary, which might have left them in British territory and raised again the question of their title to their homes, and their church and schools and factories.

Father Duncan's theory of elevation of the Indian was not to teach him religion alone, but to instruct him in crafts and occupations which should make him a self-supporting and self-respecting man. This was undertaken long before the migration of 1887. In 1870 Father Duncan went back to England to acquire a knowledge of several simple trades that he might instruct his people, and to purchase such tools and machinery as his well-conceived plans required. At Yarmouth he learned rope-making and twine-spinning, at another place blacksmithing and brush-making; he learned how to build and operate a sawmill, and with a breadth of view which explains in part his wonderful success, he learned "the gamut on each of twenty band instruments."

New Metlakahtla, which we visited on the upward passage from Seattle to Skagway, is to-day a village of 800 inhabitants. The most conspicuous object is the church, a fine-looking frame structure capable of seating practically the whole village. This house was built entirely by the Indians. It would compare favourably both in interior and exterior finish with the average church building



Residence and Totem of Chief Tlah-Go-Glass

in western towns of 2,000 people. There are a schoolhouse, a girls' boarding-school, a town hall, several stores, a sawmill run by water power, a system of water-works, a cannery where 20,000 cases of salmon can be packed in one season, two steam vessels, dock and warehouses, sidewalks, and comfortable-looking cottages of one or two stories with small flower and vegetable gardens.

About this sawmill Father Duncan tells an interesting story. When he told his people that he was going to make water saw wood, they were very sceptical, notwithstanding their great faith in him. One old man who had survived the days of cannibalism said he would never believe it. "Wait," said Father Duncan, "and you will see." When the mill had been completed, and the water brought down in a pipe from a neighbouring hill and turned on the wheel, and the saw had cut its way through the log from one end to the other, the old chief, who sat and watched the operation in silence, nodded his head solemnly and said: "I have seen water saw wood; now I die." "Why do you want to die?" he was asked. "I have seen water saw wood; now I die and take the news to the chiefs who have died but have never seen water saw wood."

This community has an organisation comprising a council of thirty members, with a presiding officer. Twenty constables constitute the police department, but their services are seldom needed. Village taxes are levied for public improvements and for the maintenance of the schools and hospital. The land belongs to the community, but individuals may acquire title from the community to



land on which to build their houses. Business is done on a business basis. The cannery and the sawmill belong to companies in which individual Indians have stock on which they receive dividends, and the employés are paid regular wages of from $1.50 to $2 a day. The people are well clothed, and the general appearance of things is that of comfort and content.

One of the features of the village is a band of twenty-one pieces, which other travellers have said plays well the national airs and other simple music. It was a matter of keen regret to the leader that nearly all his members were away fishing when we called—he would have been glad to give us a serenade. The children and many of the adults speak English, though some of them smash it up a good deal in the effort. Father Duncan met these people first on the ground of their own language, and did not insist on trying to teach them English; but the later generation has made some progress in that direction.

This is only the outline of the history of this remarkable community, and it is introduced here not because it is altogether new, but because it illustrates what has been done by one devoted man working all alone and contending, at times, not only with the ignorance and superstition and native savagery of these people, but with narrow ecclesiasticism and stupid statesmanship, and proves what can be done for the Indians of Alaska by well-directed effort.

I do not wish to be understood as assuming that Father Duncan is the only one who has laboured zealously for

the uplifting of the Alaska Indian. I have already, in a previous chapter, described the work of the Jesuit Fathers at Holy Cross Mission on the Yukon, and I do not wish to underestimate the efforts made at Anvik and at St. Michael and at Sitka and many other missionary stations along the Yukon, on the Seward Peninsula and elsewhere, but I am sure that nowhere have the results proven more satisfactory than those accomplished at Metlakahtla.

And yet all that has been done at Metlakahtla ought to be done with less effort almost anywhere else in Alaska, because these Tsimsheans whom Father Duncan has civilised were originally the most unpromising of all the natives of northwest America. The Alaska Indian, as a rule—and this applies to all the different families or groups—is an inoffensive, tractable, lavishly hospitable, honest, simple-minded fellow, who suffers from poverty and often from imposition by the white man, to whom he is yet ever ready to render kindness when called upon to do so. The prospector and the scientific explorer and the mail-carrier will testify to his honesty and the generosity with which he receives the cold and suffering traveller into his hut and yields to him the warmth and shelter and food which have saved many lives.

Judge McKenzie, who lives up at Coldfoot, on the upper Koyukuk, nearly 100 miles beyond the Arctic Circle, told me at Rampart of an incident which illustrates the disposition of the Alaska Indian. A poor old Kobuck known as Peter saw a cartoon of Uncle Sam hanging in a store at Coldfoot, in which Uncle Sam was represented



Eskimo Boy and Young Malamute



as barefooted. He understood that it was a picture of the Great White Father at Washington, and after looking at it intently for a long time he pointed to the naked feet and said: "No moccasins?" "No," said the merchant, "Uncle Sam hasn't got any moccasins." Peter looked very much puzzled and distressed, but went away without further words. A few days later he came in carrying a pair of moccasins, and, holding them up, and pointing to the cartoon, said: "Moccasins; you send Uncle Sam."

The people of Alaska are not indifferent to the just claims of the Indians upon the whites. They contribute to their necessities whenever they know of the existence of want and suffering, but the Indians never complain, and their sufferings sometimes end in death because the whites are ignorant of their condition. The people of St. Michael were greatly distressed one winter to find out almost by accident that the Indians in the village near by were perishing of cold and hunger. But all such relief must come from private purses; there are no public funds available. It is clearly the Government's duty to care for the Indians; they are not a charge upon the states or territories within the United States, and the federal Government is morally bound to take care of them in Alaska. The burden of this obligation was clearly set forth in a forcible speech by Rev. D. W. Cram before the senatorial committee at Valdez. He maintained that the Government owes the Alaska Indian: first, a living, because the changed conditions have largely deprived him of the chance to earn it himself; second, the protection of his



personal rights, in which respect he has been most unjustly treated in many ways; and, third, it owes him an education not only in books but in some of the simple arts by which he may improve his condition.

At Nome the committee listened to statements concerning the Indians by Captain J. C. Barr, of Tacoma, who has spent many years in Alaska and is one of the best informed men on the Indian question on the Pacific coast, and by Major J. F. A. Strong, editor of the Nome *Nugget*. Captain Barr favoured the establishment of one or two reservations where the Indians might be collected and taken care of, somewhat on the reservation plan in the States. Major Strong advocated the appointment of agents who should be charged with the duty of caring for the Indians, and who should protect them from being defrauded in the sale of the product of their native handicrafts, by which they could, if thus assisted, aid materially in their own support. Both Captain Barr and Major Strong condemned rigorously the restrictions laid upon the Indians by the game laws.

The Eskimo is by nature a hunter. He seeks his game on land and sea. The walrus, the whale and the seal afforded him food and shelter before the white man drove these animals beyond his power to pursue them in his comparatively frail oomiak. Rev. C. E. Ryberg, of Nome, who has proven his right to speak for the natives by services rendered to them, suggests as a practical measure of relief that the Government furnish for the use of the natives of the west and north coasts small steam vessels



with which they may take whales and walrus. He claims there is experience to justify the expectation that this could be made a very profitable business for the natives, who are experts in this line, after reimbursing the Government for its expense in equipping and sailing the ships. The whaling business is again attracting white whalers for the profit there is in it, and he argues that it would be even more profitable for the Eskimos. Whalebone is now worth $7.50 a pound, the ivory of the walrus is valuable and $20,000 in whale oil is a moderate catch for a schooner in a single season. This looks like a practical plan to restore a native industry which once was adequate to the support of these people, but which would be revived under very much more favourable conditions than originally prevailed.

If one would see the disastrous consequences of the unrestricted contact of the Indians with the whites he need go no further than the sandspit at Nome, where are encamped during the summer Eskimos from points all along the coast and as far away as East Cape, Siberia. The Indians of Alaska are not noted for chastity under any conditions, and the conditions which exist there are about the worst in this respect, while the easy access to "fire-water" produces the results that might naturally be expected.

I brought away from Alaska no more persistent and recurring impression than that of the heavy obligation resting upon the Government to do something to ameliorate the condition of these wretched people of the north,

who have fallen into our hands through no fault of their own, and for whom the Government has thus far done so very little.

The McCulloch arrived in Seattle harbour in the early morning of Thursday, August 27. We left there June 28, so that our trip from the sound to the Arctic and back again to Seattle had occupied just two months. The distance covered from Minneapolis and back to this city aggregated a little over 10,000 miles.

From St. Michael to Seattle we travelled by the revenue cutter McCulloch, stopping at such points as the members of the senatorial committee wished to reach. The log of that splendid ship showed that we had travelled with her 3,406 miles, and just twenty-eight days. For the many courtesies received at the hands of Captain W. C. Coulson and Lieutenant F. M. Dunwoody and all the officers of the ship I am personally under heavy obligations. Captain Coulson reached the age of retirement about six weeks after our arrival at Seattle, and is now enjoying the rest and leisure he has so well earned after more than forty years of faithful and honourable service to his country. Lieutenant Dunwoody has received a well-earned promotion, and is now in command of another ship in the revenue service. I shall hear of his continued success and of the advancement of any of his fellows of the McCulloch with great pleasure, as they proved themselves on that long voyage to be courteous gentlemen and capable and faithful servants of their government.

As for the tour of the members of the senatorial committee, I am sure that in time it will result in great things for Alaska. I believe they came back greatly impressed with the possibilities of that wonderful country and realising fully the peculiar responsibility which rests upon them to advance its interests in every way. They made serious business of their tour of investigation every day, and have the information which qualifies them to shape legislation with respect to Alaska wisely and for the best interests of a country which is one day destined to contain several millions of prosperous people.

Since the publication of the preceding chapters in newspaper form, for the purposes of this book and to make more complete and timely this story of Alaska as it is to-day, the following two chapters on "The New Fairbanks District," and on the great possibilities of "The Reindeer Industry," have been added.

J. S. M.

XIV

THE FAIRBANKS DISTRICT

SOMEBODY in describing the gold fields of the north has said: "The gold of Alaska is where you find it." That may not strike you as a very profound remark, but it is significant, nevertheless. The geologist has done very little to aid the prospector in the north. The prospector has been ahead of him nearly every time. The geologist has come along afterwards and studied the conditions and reported on them, but for all practical purposes the scientific men have cut a small figure in the development of the country. But that isn't their fault. Think of the immense extent of country to be surveyed, the inadequate number of men engaged in scientific exploration and the meagreness of the appropriation for that purpose compared with the ground to be covered, and the difficulties under which the work must be done.

It was a squaw man who uncovered the riches of the Klondike; a trio of reindeer herders staked the first claim on Anvil Creek; the last great stampede in Alaska followed the lead of a weary and footsore Italian coal-miner, who, deserted by his last companion, and working alone among the hills between the Little Chena and the Chatinka rivers, whose waters flow into the Tanana from the north, hit upon the treasures of what is now known as the Fair-



banks District. It is 250 miles in a direct line from Dawson to Fairbanks; it is 500 miles in a straight line from Fairbanks to Nome; and the great Treadwell mines are 700 miles from either of these mining centres. Where the next important discovery is to be made is a secret of the future, with nothing more to suggest how or when or where it will be revealed than preceded the unfolding of the others. Alaska is a big country. That's what the word "Alaska" means; gold seems to have been scattered all over it. The only difficulty is to find places where it has been sown thick enough by the hand of nature to make it profitable to gather it.

The new discoveries in the Tanana valley were beginning to attract some attention and led to a small stampede in the summer of 1903. On board the Healy, the steamer which our party overtook at Nulato, on our trip down the Yukon, I found two Minnesota men who had just come out of the Tanana country very much disappointed, and resolved that that was the last stampede in which they would ever engage. Since then six or seven thousand have gone in, most of them are there yet and thousands more will no doubt go this year (1905).

Felix Pedro sought for gold four summers among the hills and along the creeks of the Forty-Mile district, the Kitchumstock and in the Circle City district, and finally on the banks of the creeks which rise west of the Forty-Mile district and flow into the Tanana. Here in July, 1902, he found at last the object of his search. Known as a careful and diligent prospector, his movements were



Getting Busy in Fairbanks



closely watched by others who desired to take advantage of his industry and his persistence. To avoid revealing the secret of his discovery before he could secure the results of his labours for himself and those who had aided him in his search, he made his camp several miles from the scene of his mining operations, and going secretly each day to his work before and after daylight, cutting his way through the frozen ground without fires, and carrying the waste up a ladder in a sack, he succeeded in locating claims which have since made him and his friends independent of further concern with regard to the fortunes of the miner.

Travellers up the Tanana from the Yukon in the summer of 1903 would have found 200 miles from the mouth of the Tanana a rambling village of 150 to 200 people. The name given to this place was Fairbanks, out of compliment to the present vice-president, who as a senator had manifested unusual interest in the District of Alaska. To-day there stands on the same site a city of 5,000 people, incorporated, with extensive business houses, two lumber mills producing 25,000 feet daily and unable to supply the demand, two newspapers, schools, churches, a free library, a hospital, electric lights, a telephone system and a real-estate boom. Business lots, 50 feet front, rent as high as $300 a month ground rent, and others less favourably situated sold during the past year for $3,000. This town has telegraphic communication by means of the Alaska Government system with Nome, Rampart, Eagle, Dawson, Valdez and Seattle. The telephone system not

only connects different parts of the town, which is scattered for a mile and a half along the Little Chena River, but furnishes communication also with Chena, 20 miles west on the Tanana, and with the mining camps on the creeks, 20 to 30 miles northeast. A road is in course of construction from Fairbanks to the centre of the mining district, and a railroad over the same route is already projected and promised as one of the developments of the coming year.

The routes of transportation to Fairbanks from Seattle are, in summer, either by way of Skagway and the White Pass line to Dawson, thence down the Yukon River to the mouth of the Tanana and up the Tanana, or by way of St. Michael up the Yukon and the Tanana; in winter, many will take the trail from Dawson or Circle City into this new region, but more will go by the shorter route through Valdez, up the Copper River valley, and down the Tanana. Many are expected to make their advent during the winter by the latter, which is much the shorter route, travelling overland with dog teams or horses from Valdez.

During the past summer the stampede from Dawson into this new gold field threatened to depopulate the metropolis of the Klondike. It is estimated that 3,000 people left Dawson for Fairbanks by the Yukon River, and that three-quarters of a million dollars' worth of goods were shipped by the Dawson dealers to the Tanana, while $250,000 has been sent out from that centre for investment in the Fairbanks mines and in various business



enterprises. The stampede to the Fairbanks district has also brought the largest volume of business to the fleet of boats on the lower Yukon since the rush to the Klondike in 1898. The earnings of these river boats, and chiefly from the Tanana business, is estimated at from $500,000 to $750,000 for the season of 1904. The fare from Dawson to Fairbanks was $40 second class, $70 first class and the freight rate, $70 a ton. The Tanana is not navigable by the larger river steamers and much of the freight billed to Fairbanks must be re-shipped at the mouth of that river. From St. Michael to Fairbanks, the freight rates are $90 a ton, while the carrying charge from Fairbanks out to the creeks ranges from 10 to 20 cents a pound during the summer, but was reduced during the winter to less than half that figure. It is 16 miles from Fairbanks to Discovery claim on Pedro Creek and 25 miles from Fairbanks to Cleary Creek, on which most of the development has been done. It is stated that $2,200 was paid last summer for the transportation of a 20-horsepower boiler from Fairbanks, 12 miles back into the mining district. This enormous expense is to be accounted for, of course, only by the fact that there are no roads through that country worthy the name. It is expected that scores of steam boilers and thousands of tons of other freight and machinery will be taken into the mining district during the winter, but this is a comparatively easy task when the surface of the ground is frozen. Fairbanks itself is difficult of access owing to the necessity of transferring the freight from the larger steamers at the mouth of the Tanana to smaller



Fresh Arrivals at Fairbanks



steamers adapted to the navigation of the stream and of the still smaller Chena, on the banks of which Fairbanks is located. This fact, and the heavy demand for supplies of all kinds, explains such prices at Fairbanks as $10 to $12 for 100 pounds of flour; bread 25 cents a loaf; 20 cents a pound for sugar; 30 to 35 cents a pound for hams and bacon; 15 to 18 cents a pound for potatoes; butter $1 a pound; $28 a case for eggs; moosemeat, 60 cents a pound; beef, 60 cents to $1.25; lumber, rough, $75 a thousand; dressed, $100. Even at these prices it is difficult to meet the demand, and a shortage of the food supply at Fairbanks was expected in winter. Last spring there was such a scarcity of food that wild-goose eggs commanded 50 cents apiece, and the first fresh beef brought into the camp sold for 75 cents to $1.50 a pound. These prices, too, are not the result of any desire or attempt to corner the supplies, for efforts of that kind are guarded against by the commercial companies which handle most of the trade, no individual being allowed to buy more than a reasonable amount at one time.

Manifestly Fairbanks is no place for a poor man and this is true not only on account of the cost of living, but for the reason that prospecting in that country involves sinking shafts 10 to 20 feet in order to reach the gold-bearing stratum. Wages for mechanics average $1.50 an hour, $1 an hour for common labour, and $25 a day for a team. But such wages are not out of keeping with the cost of living in this as yet comparatively inaccessible mining district.

The ore in the Fairbanks district is taken by traders at $16 an ounce. The miners, not satisfied with that price, have had it assayed and find it is worth $17.50, which shows that this is a fine quality of gold, better than that in the Klondike, and nearly as fine as that at Nome. It is more inaccessible, however, than at either of the other places. In the Klondike the gold is often found exposed or very slightly covered along the beds of the creeks. The same is true at Nome. In the Fairbanks district there seems to be no gold in the creek bottoms, but it lies up on the ledges and on the hillsides in a stratum of gold-bearing gravel two or three feet thick, and is located only after sinking shafts 10 to 20 feet from the surface. Occasionally the stratum crops out on the hillside and may be drifted out, as the miners say; that is, tunnelled for from the hillside, but in all cases it is frozen and can only be removed after the ground is thawed. This makes the use of the boiler or thawer essential, and it is stated that 125 boilers have been taken into these creeks during the past year. Doubtless many more will be employed during the coming year, showing a remarkable degree of confidence in the district and a stage of development rarely achieved in so short a time. The thawer used in mining in Alaska is simply a boiler for the generation of steam, which is delivered by a pipe in the shaft. On the end of the steam pipe is a flexible connection carrying the steam into a hollow steel tube five feet in length, pointed, with apertures at the point for the escape of the steam. This steel point is driven into the frozen gravel, the steam is turned on, and pre-

sently the ground is softened up for a diameter of two or three feet. The process is much more rapid than might be supposed by the inexperienced. By this method mining is carried on in Alaska and the Klondike all winter, and the ore is taken out and piled on the dump for sluicing in summer. The frozen condition of the ground at a depth of 15 or 20 feet largely obviates the necessity of timbering, as the supports left for the purpose sustain the frozen roof of the mine without the aid of supports. Water in the Fairbanks region has been abundant thus far, and is likely to continue adequate for all the necessities of the industry.

That the district is a rich one, and that it may yet rival the Klondike, is supported by the prices men who know the district best are willing to pay for mining properties in it. A half-interest in one claim on Cleary Creek advanced within a month from $19,600 to $35,000, out of which $6,000 had been taken during the interval between the purchase and sale. Reports are made of clean-ups of $1,600 on Cleary Creek after a run of two days, with five men at work; another of $700 for two days' run with four men in the drift, while the remarkable claim is made that for a six days' run on a Cleary Creek claim, working 18 to 20 men, the output was $16,280. Seventy-five thousand dollars has been refused for an adjacent claim, which could have been bought a year ago for $1,000, and $127,500 was not enough to buy a two-thirds interest in another Cleary Creek property.

These are only a few facts bearing upon the development of what certainly promises to be a wonderfully rich

district, one in which there will be required the possession of some capital in order to develop and successfully carry on a mining enterprise, but enterprising men,—young, strong, and vigorous,—capable of withstanding the hardships of a miner's life in Alaska, and with $1,000 to $5,000 to work with, have opportunities here which will no doubt prove attractive to many during the coming season.

A steam boiler of 8 to 20 horsepower costs from $125 to $200 at Fairbanks. This, aside from the necessary food supply, with lumber enough to build a cabin, constitutes the chief expense of an outfit. Many men have gone into Alaska, or the Klondike, with nothing more than a shovel, a pick and a pan, and what food they could carry on their backs, and have struck it rich; but it will require resources of more liberal quantity than that to insure success in the Fairbanks district at present. The gold-bearing area, so far as it has been located, extends over a district probably 40 miles square, and has already been pretty thoroughly prospected. The opportunities offered there now are mainly to those having money enough to buy promising claims, or enough to provide the machinery and the supplies for a part interest in a claim. Men of experience in mining will have an advantage over the " tenderfoot " or the " chee-cha-ko," and doubtless some wasted fortunes will be restored in this promising camp.

It is one of the characteristics of a lucky miner that a fortune quickly made is quickly wasted. Roaming over the gold fields of the north to-day are many men on whom



fortune has smiled; men who have made their lucky strikes, have reaped their tens, their hundreds of thousands, but are to-day as poor as when they first took up the miner's pick. Such men are to be found in Fairbanks. "Swift Water Bill" struck it rich in the Klondike, and became one of the characters of Dawson. It pleased him to set out California champagne at $30 dollars a bottle to any one who would drink with him. It is one of the traditions of Dawson that he once made eggs in that town worth $2 apiece by cornering the entire market out of spite against a fickle favourite. At the same time his tastes were not cultivated to the elevation of $30 champagne. When Bill had money he went to New York to find a place big enough in which to spend it. He had heard that meals could be had at Sherry's which cost $25, and he "cut loose" with an order for ham and eggs. "Swift Water Bill" turned up at Fairbanks one day last summer looking for some one to furnish him a grub stake, and soon became manager of a property out of which the owner took $60,000 before selling it for $55,000.

XV

THE REINDEER INDUSTRY

ALASKA is not often thought of as a live-stock country, and yet it has been the scene of a very interesting and very successful experiment in animal husbandry. I do not know whether the Rev. Sheldon Jackson is entitled to all the credit of having conceived the idea of importing domesticated reindeer from Siberia, but, as I understand it, he is entitled to the credit of having acted upon it, with results already important and destined in a short time to be very much more valuable not only to the Eskimo, in whose behalf this enterprise was undertaken, but to the white settlers as well.

The invasion of the northern seas by the whaling ship had driven the whale, the walrus and the seal so far from their accustomed haunts along the Alaskan shore that the natives were unable to pursue these sources of food and shelter and clothing in their frail hunting boats. The introduction of firearms and the use of them by the natives themselves in wasteful slaughter had driven so much of the game from western Alaska that every means of subsistence was failing rapidly. It was in view of this desperate situation, and influenced by the fact that just across Bering Strait people of substantially the same characteristics were comparatively prosperous and well-to-do



through reliance upon their reindeer herds, that the introduction of reindeer into Alaska was undertaken. The domesticated reindeer of Siberia and the wild caribou of Alaska are generically the same animal; but it was manifestly easier to import the domesticated animal than to attempt to domesticate the wild one.

It was in 1891 that Mr. Jackson, thoroughly familiar with the conditions among the Eskimo by reason of his office as general agent of education in Alaska, obtained from the Government permission to use the revenue cutter Thetis for a trip to Siberia for the purchase of reindeer. The Government had been asked to make an appropriation for this purpose, but so little confidence was reposed in the scheme by those in authority that no public money was available. Private citizens, having confidence in Mr. Jackson's judgment and sympathy with the cause, furnished $2,000 with which to purchase reindeer. The next obstacle was to remove the objections of the Siberians themselves. While they were glad to obtain money or goods, they were reluctant to dispose of any of their animals. Social rank was determined largely by the number of reindeer the individual possessed. It was like lowering one's dignity and standing in the community to sell his reindeer. And this obstacle was not overcome until the Thetis had cruised for 1,500 miles along the coast of Siberia, picking up a reindeer here and one there, until finally 16 were obtained and carried to Amaknak Island, in the Aleutian chain. The next year 171 were obtained and taken to Port Clarence; the first permanent reindeer



Midday Rest of Reindeer Herd



station was established, and named Teller Station. In later expeditions to buy reindeer, and through arrangements made with the Russian Government, reindeer were obtained as a loan, with the understanding that the same number were in the course of time to be returned.

There are said to be hundreds of thousands of square miles of what is known as reindeer moss in Alaska. This is a grey, hard, brittle form of vegetation which in the matter of consistency and palatableness ought to take high rank as a breakfast food. It is, however, a very nourishing plant, and upon this wild caribou feed in winter, the summer forage of the caribou as well as of the reindeer consisting of the green growth of grass and shrubs.

The imported reindeer, coming to conditions similar to those from which they had been brought, throve and multiplied, demonstrating the practicability of stocking the plains and hills of Alaska with herds of this exceedingly useful animal. The Government in 1894, satisfied with the results accomplished, made an appropriation of $6,000 for the further development of the reindeer industry. Appropriations have been made annually ever since and in increasing amounts, until now they amount to $25,000, and the reindeer herds, which began 13 years ago with the first lot of 16, have increased to over 7,000. These animals are distributed in herds of various sizes from Point Barrow, the most northern habitation of the white man on the Arctic Ocean, to Bethel Mission, a thousand miles south at the mouth of the Kuskokwim.



Laps and Reindeer



Of course, the Alaskan Eskimo, having never kept domesticated reindeer, had to be taught how to care for them. For this purpose the Government imported a number of Laplanders and Finns, and also brought over for a short time several Siberians. As a rule reindeer stations have been established by the Government in connection with some church mission, for the existence of the mission implies the presence of an Eskimo village and a number of young Eskimo men from whom may be selected those best qualified for this work. The Eskimo serves an apprenticeship of five years as a herder in connection with some mission station, his wages consisting mainly of a certain number of deer set apart for him each year, so that at the end of his apprenticeship he may start in the reindeer business on his own account. The object of the Government in introducing this industry being to benefit the Eskimo and not the white man, it has forbidden the sale of female reindeer to any one but Eskimos, so that no others, for the present at least, may become possessed of reindeer herds.

Under this arrangement about sixty Eskimos have been started in business for themselves as owners of reindeer herds, and have been raised from a condition of dependence and poverty to comfort and comparative affluence.

The services which the reindeer renders are many and valuable. The reindeer supplies food; his pelt supplies clothing and shelter. The reindeer is a great success as a means of transportation, packing 150 to 200 pounds on his back, or hauling 500 pounds on a sled, and travelling

from 35 to 50 miles a day. The reindeer may be a source of revenue to his owner, who may sell his flesh in the market or sell his services as a means of transportation. At the same time, this commonly docile animal, capable also of great endurance, is practically self-supporting. He



Group of Laplanders in Alaska

will find his favourite food in winter under any depth of snow yet experienced in that country, and, turned loose from the sled after a long hard day's travel, will proceed to rustle for himself like the self-reliant fellow that he is. Those who have tested his capacity for work declare that he is much more useful than the dog or the horse, whose feed must be provided, since he is able to find subsistence



for himself in almost every part of that country at all times of the year.

The flesh of the reindeer is equal to that of the wild caribou, or the deer, and scarcely inferior to the best American beef. A carcass is worth in the market of Nome from $40 to $60, while the reindeer, trained to the sled or the saddle, is ordinarily valued at $100 to $150. So it is apparent that from the financial standpoint the importation of domesticated reindeer into Alaska has already proven a success.

But even if this were not true, the service which the reindeer herds of Alaska rendered in the winter of 1897 and 1898 in connection with the relief expedition to Point Barrow, led by Captain Jarvis, would justify the whole undertaking. It will be remembered that Captain Jarvis took several hundred head of reindeer from the reindeer stations around Norton Sound when he went to the relief of the imprisoned and famishing whalers, and saved the lives of scores of them by the relief which he brought and the regulations which he enforced. Two hundred and forty-six reindeer were slaughtered at Point Barrow that spring for the subsistence of the sailors, affording a kind of food essential to their health, brought on foot, and the only kind which could ever have been taken to their relief.

Several contracts have been made by the Government with owners of reindeer for transportation of the mails in winter, and their fitness for this service has been amply demonstrated.



Mary Andrewuk, Reindeer Rancher and Richest Native Woman **in Alaska**



The Government has come to recognise the reindeer as a valuable contributor to the development of Alaska; it has made it a crime punishable by a fine of $50 to drive a reindeer away from a herd, and imposes imprisonment for not less than a year for stealing one of these animals. The reindeer have adapted themselves readily to conditions naturally favourable to them in Alaska. They are prolific, and the natural increase will soon stock all western Alaska with hundreds of thousands of these useful and valuable animals.

So it appears that through the introduction of reindeer Alaska is destined to be supplied with an excellent substitute for beef cattle, while the usefulness of the reindeer as a means of transportation will add an important element of value to these herds. The skin of the reindeer, too, is capable of being converted into garments attractive in colour and finish, and likely to be popular in the fur markets of the country, while the less desirable skins will be used for shelter tents and other purposes.

At the same time the influence of this new industry upon the natives is likely to be of immense value. It will eventually convert many of them from a state of pauperism and mendicancy into independent, self-supporting men many grades higher in intelligence, health and comfort than before the reindeer became an institution on the Seward Peninsula. Indeed, the introduction of the reindeer into Alaska is, in its possibilities, at least, the most important thing the Government has done for the material welfare of the natives of Alaska.


135
130
125
EAN
70
70
RCLE
Mackenzie R.
SIBERIA
65
65
AILE
NSON
YR.
YUKON







INDEX





INDEX

Agriculture, on upper Yukon, 34, 38, 78, 94; Holy Cross, 120; Copper River valley, 231; Sitka, 262; Tanana valley, 265; compared with Russia, 270
Aleutian Islands, 194, 200
Andraefski, 124
Anvik, 117
Anvil Creek, 158
Arctic Brotherhood, 104
Arctic Circle, 40, 96

Baranof, Alex., 242
Bennett, Lake, 27
Bering Sea, 175
Bertholf, Lt. E. P., 85
Bompas, Bishop Wm., 28, 29
Bonanza Creek, 61
Boundary line, 27
Brady, Gov. John G., 258; as a gardener, 262

" Cache," the Alaska cellar, 110
Call, Dr. S. J., 85
Cattle and sheep, 114, 214, 266
" Chee-cha-ko," 41
Circle City, 94
Clean-up, in Klondike, 64; Nome district, 164; Fairbanks, 312
Cleary Creek, 312
Climate, 15, 45, 235
Coal, 173, 242
Commerce, 1, 173
Commissioners, powers of, 102
Congdon, Commissioner Yukon Territory, 55
Copper, 229
Council City, 168
Curios, 130, 198, 246

Dawson, fare to, 32; seen from river, 39; routes to, 40; telegraphs and newspapers, 41, 54, 76; population, 42, 44; shops, 44; public buildings, 45; latitude, 45; climate, 45; market prices, 46; schools, 49; amusements, 48; midnight sun, 49; law enforcement, 50, 53, 54; paying in gold dust, 68
Delegate in Congress, 6, 252, 256

Discovery of Alaska, 175
Dogs in Alaska, 90
Downing, Ben, 87
Duncan, Father William, 12, 288
Dutch Harbour, 196

Eagle City, 76, 78, 92, 93
Eldorado Creek, 62
Eskimo—see Natives

Fairbanks, 44, 304; routes to, 307; market prices, 310; real-estate prices, 306; value of ore, 311; rich claims, 312
Finns, 320
Fisheries, 6; salmon output, 202, 212; methods, 203; packing, 204; spawning, 208; hatcheries, 210; tax, 211; other fish, 202, 212
Forty-Mile, 39, 61, 76
Fox ranching, 216
Fort Egbert, 76, 78
Fort Gibbon, 116
Fort Yukon, 96, 99
Frost line, 112, 162
Fur seal, rookeries, 176; annual catch, 179; method of killing, 182; pelagic sealing, 187, 190; habits of seal, 187, 188; peculiar seal nomenclature, 188; poaching, 188, 191; sealing privilege, 192

Game laws, 282
Glaciers, Columbian, 217; Valdez, 218; Malaspina, 240
Gold dust used as money, 68; values in Klondike, 69; Nome, 164; Fairbanks, 311
Gold output, Alaska, 154; Klondike, 74; Nome, 171; Fairbanks, 311; cost of, 172
Government of Alaska, 101, 260

Holy Cross, 119
Homestead claim, 269

Indians—see Natives
" Inside passage," 9

Jackson museum, 108, 246
Jackson, Rev. Sheldon, 315
Japan current, 15
Jarvis, Capt. D. H., 82
Judiciary, government by, 101
Juneau, 16, 18

Kazhim, 131
Ketchikan, 12, 14
Klondike, discovery, 56, 58; character of gold, 64, 69; mining methods, 64; staking of claim, 70; output, 74
Kodiak, 213

Laplanders, 320
Lighthouse service, 10

McCulloch, The, 135, 137
Mail facilities, 6, 78, 88, 171
Marble, 242
Mastodon, 112
Metlakahtla, 12, 288
Midnight sun, 49
Mining laws, 6; in Klondike, 70, 74; in Alaska, 166, 272; power of attorney, 272; compared with Yukon Ter., 274
Mining methods, in Klondike, 64; at Nome, 159, 160, 162; Fairbanks, 311
Mosquitoes, 118, 123
Mt. McKinley, 237
Mt. St. Elias, 237, 240
"Mushing," 88

Natives, origin, 11; graves, 119; habits, 130; social life, 131; dances, 134; on Seal Islands, 178; decimation, 276; treatment of, 278, 284; original condition, 280; food, 280; tribes, 284; citizens, 285; schools, 121, 285; hospitable, 296; obligation to, 298; service of reindeer, 324
Newspapers, 54, 169
Nome, 140; harbour, 142, 148, 171; description, 150; population, 152; social life, 154, 156; first strike, 157; water supply, 159; clean-up, 164; government of, 169; gold output, 171; cost of output, 172
Northwest mounted police, 27, 31, 36, 51; recommended for Alaska, 54
Nulato, 116, 117

Opportunities, 4, 310, 313

Panning for gold, 64
Petroleum, 240
Political condition, 248
Population, 250
Potlatch, 131
Prices, 46, 170, 222, 224
Pt. Barrow relief expedition, 82
Purchase of Alaska, 3

Railways, 24; at Nome, 159; Valdez to Eagle, 218, 226, 228; profitable, 229; Seward to Tanana, 234
Rampart, 99
Reindeer, introduction, domesticated, 316; thriving industry, 318
Revenue cutter service, 136, 138
Roads, 6, 24, 56; need of, in Alaska, 220; Yukon Territory, 220; effect on freights, 222; precursor of railroads, 231; government aid, 232, 261; cost of, in Alaska, 232; freights at Fairbanks, 308

Royalty on Klondike gold, 69
Russia in Alaska, 124, 175, 242

St. Michael, 126
Salmon—see Fisheries
Schools, 121, 285, 286
Seattle, 6, 9
Senatorial committee, 5, 302
Sitka, 242, 245, 248
Skagway, 9, 22
" Sour Dough," 41
Sports, 48
Staking a claim, 70
Swineford, Ex-Gov., 15

Taxes, Yukon Ter., 56; in Alaska, 102, 260
Telegraph, 41, 76, 116, 117, 171, 306
Telephone, 306
Territorial government, 6, 101, 248; home rule, 250; obstacles, 250, 252; precedents, 255; objections, 259
Tin, 174
Treadwell mine, 16, 18

Unalaska, 195, 199

Valdez, 217, 219
Vancouver Island, 9

Wages, 310
Whaling, 315
White Horse, 24, 31
White Pass, 21, 23, 26
Women in Alaska, 80, 156
Wood, Col. Z. T., 51
Wrangell, 16

Yukon River, travel on, 32; size of, 34; solitudes, 36; colour, 38; flats, 96; delta, 126
Yukon Ter., buildings, 45; organisation, 55; taxes, 56





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